

Labour Monthly

EDITOR R. PALME DUTT

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

BRITAIN'S CRISIS— THE WAY FORWARD

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CORRESPONDENCE

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AWARD

SOME MONTHS AGO one of our most constant supporters offered a complete set of **LABOUR MONTHLY**, 1921-41, in 21 leather-bound volumes as a prize for the most deserving Discussion Group. This has now been awarded to the Group at Forest Gate (London). Only nine months old, its average attendance is 40; it has formed neighbouring groups; it has regular Marxist Study classes; it caused the formation of a local Anglo-Soviet Committee, and has held several public meetings; a library has been started and much literature is sold. Such a record sets a standard for all our Groups.

LABOUR MONTHLY DISCUSSION GROUPS

(Places in bold type are new groups in 1942. Places in italic type are projected groups.)
Please send stamped addressed envelope for particulars.

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Abercynon, Aberdeen, Abertillery, Alloa, **ALTRINCHAM**, Andover, Arundel, **AYR**, Bacup, Barnstaple, Barrow-in-Furness, Basingstoke, Bath, Batley, Biddulph, Birkenhead, Blackpool, Blyth, Bournemouth, Bowhill, Bridgend, Brighton, Bristol, Brynmawr, Buckhaven, Burry Port, Bury, Cardiff, Cardigan, Carlisle, Cheadle, Cheltenham, Chester, Chippenham, Cirencester, Cleethorpes, Clevedon, Coatbridge, Cowes, Crosskeys, Cudworth, Dartmouth, Derby, Doncaster, Dumbarton, Dumfries, East Grinstead, Edinburgh, Exeter, Farnborough (Hants), Farnham, Fawley, Fleetwood, *Folkestone*, Glasgow, Gloucester, Grantham, Greenock, **GUISELEY**, Halifax, **HEANOR**, Hereford, Horsham, Hyde, Kendal, Kidderminster, Leyland, Liverpool, Llanelly, Luton, Macclesfield, Maidstone, Maldon (Essex), Manchester, Mansfield, Marple, *Medway Towns*, **MERSEYSIDE**, Middlesbrough, Minehead, **NANTWICH**, Neath, Nelson, **NETLEY**, Newark, **NEW MILLS**, Newcastle (Staffs), Newcastle-on-Tyne, Newton, **NORTHALLERTON**, **NUNEATON**, Paisley, Penrith, Perth, Peterborough, Portchester, Port Talbot, Preston, **RAWTENSTALL**, Reading, Renfrew, Renton (Alexandria), Rhondda, Ringwood, Rugby, *Rushden*, **RYTON**, **ST. HELENS**, Salisbury, **SALTCOATS**, Scunthorpe, Sedgley, Sheffield, Shrewsbury, **SKIPTON**, Somerton, Southampton, Stafford, Stockport, Stoke-on-Trent, Stourbridge, Stroud, Sunderland, **SWINDON**, *Talgath*, Tamworth, Tonypanydy, Tonyrefail, Topsham, Tunbridge Wells, Walsall, Wareham, Warrington, Warwick, Wednesbury, Westbury, Weston-super-Mare, Winchester, Wirral, Wolverhampton, Woodbridge, Worcester, Worksop, Worthing, Wrexham, **YARMOUTH**, **YEADON**, Yeovil.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Hour of Crisis—Decisive Struggles of 1942—Strategy of Victory—Basic Changes Needed—Are We Ready?—The Government and the People—Obstacles to Action—Whose Spring Offensive?—Fatal Defensive Strategy—Misjudgment of the Soviet Union—Post-War Speculations—British-Soviet Collaboration for Victory—Production—Suicidal Self-Strangling—Communist Party Proposals—India : What Must be Done—The Basis for National Unity—What the People Demand of the Government.

A CRISIS of policy, a crisis of strategy and a crisis of Government is developing in this country. Nothing is to be gained by diminishing the gravity of the decisions which require to be taken. There is no question of any weakening of the overwhelming national unity and determination behind the Government which expressed itself in the practically unanimous vote of confidence at the end of January. But the question is growing insistent in the minds of wide sections whether the present ruling direction of strategy and whether the present composition of the Government is capable of winning the war—that is to say, is capable of responding to the urgent positive issues for action of this decisive year of the war in 1942, on our response to which depends the prospect of victory. The conviction is by now well-nigh universal that radical changes must be made to ensure such a response and to ensure victory, and that these changes need to be made without delay if we are not to be too late.

WHAT is the heart of the dilemma confronting the people of this country? The latest developments of the war : the chain of reverses in the Far East, beginning with the temporary

deprivation of sea-power through not inevitable causes, and passing through the loss of Hong Kong and the loss of Malaya to Singapore ; the threat to Burma, India and Australia ; the reversal of the Libyan offensive, and revelations of miscalculation in tank construction ; the Nazi warships in the Straits of Dover, and revelations of weakness of air reconnaissance and of co-ordination of air and sea strategy ; the staggering shortage of equipment after seven years' intensive rearmament, and the half-hearted approach even now to the tasks of reorganisation of production—all these have shocked opinion into realisation of the growing urgency of the situation. Blow after blow is demonstrating the deadly consequences of the policy of passive waiting till 1943. Before even the second month of this critical year has passed, with its already crowded events and increasing tempo of the war, it is becoming clear to all that the decisive struggles are set for 1942.

AT the same time, alongside the temporary reverses of the Anglo-American forces in the secondary fields of conflict, the continued advance of the Soviet offensive in the principal

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Eastern theatre of war against the main forces of Nazism, governing the war situation as a whole and outweighing the reverses in other fields, is more and more unmistakably pointing the positive way forward for the strategy of victory. It is pointing the way forward, not merely for their strategy of victory, but for the united Allied strategy of victory, provided that we adjust our dispositions in accordance with these realities and participate to the full extent of our strength in this common objective by the two-fronted offensive to strike Hitlerism to the heart in 1942. It becomes more and more clear that this is the key which can alone unlock victory, and resolve the problems and ensure the rapid regaining of mastery also in the Far East, the Atlantic and every other theatre of war. But this key is not yet in our grasp, until we have that strategic direction, readiness of public opinion, and a Government which is willing and able to wield it and to organise all our forces for this supreme objective.

THIS is the situation which is calling for a radical recasting of strategy, organisation and political leadership from this side to meet the new facts of the position, and counter the new dangers by exploiting the new possibilities for positive action. But it is precisely here that there is no sign as yet of readiness, realisation or leadership. The Maginot outlook, the defensive retreats, the boasting of impregnable strongholds which collapse before the boaster's voice has died on the air, the talk of 1943 while the foundations of the position are being thrown away in 1942, all these continue and cause inevitable alarm and dismay. There is not an echo of response as yet from official quarters, there is not even a hint of a sign of awareness of the existence of the Soviet conception of victory in 1942 by the combined offensive against Hitlerism this year. The deadly dichotomy of strategy still continues, with consequences which

we are having to pay for in bitter experience.

HEREIN is the dilemma which underlies the sharpening political situation, the sense of bankruptcy of official policy. It is not a question of automatic, unthinking or panic-stricken reaction to reverses, when reverses must be expected in the fortunes of war and require to be met with resolution, vigilance and strengthened determination. The sharpened political situation arises because the reverses are recognised as only the symptom of deeper issues of strategy and direction, of laxity and unpreparedness on the part of many of those in commanding positions, of reactionary policies hampering full mobilisation of forces, and, above all, of lack of co-ordination of strategy, when such co-ordination is decisive for victory.

WHILE Hitler is summoning all his forces and calling on all his vassals for his supreme hope of his spring offensive, the Soviet Union without one day's intermission already hurls its blows against the enemy on every front. The Soviet Union declares its aim to press forward its advance so as to batter and blunt that offensive before it can be delivered. Knowing the magnitude of Hitler's still unbroken forces, we cannot for one moment under-estimate the magnitude of that task, requiring the maximum strength and participation of the entire anti-Fascist alliance. *The Soviet Union proclaims its determination that the decisive offensive of 1942 shall be the offensive to shatter Nazism. The Soviet Union calls with an ever louder voice to all the peoples of Europe to participate in this offensive. Where do we stand in this?*

WE are approaching the greatest battles in human history in these coming months. Where do we stand in these battles? What part are we playing? Is opinion here prepared? Can

we be said to be participating with our full strength, if only one in twenty of our armed forces are directly engaging the enemy, or if our factories are still filled with idle machines and labour standing idle? Is there a common strategy? Have we established that position, in respect of the forces in the Government, the organisation of production, or the direction of strategy, to ensure the maximum common action for victory? These questions press themselves with daily greater force, as we advance into the critical months of the spring offensives.

AT the end of January the Government received its vote of confidence by the emphatic majority of 464 to 1. That vote of confidence was a correct and necessary demonstration of national unity behind the Government for the prosecution of the war to complete victory over Nazism, for the fulfilment of the alliance with the Soviet Union, the United States and the other nations in the common front, and against all disruption of the alliance or of the coalition in this country supporting the alliance. It dealt a blow to the backstairs intrigues of notorious reactionary elements, previously associated with open pro-Fascist championship, which seeks to utilise the widespread dissatisfaction with particular aspects of the Government's policy, not in order to strengthen the war front, but in order to weaken it by undermining the position of the Prime Minister as the principal spokesman of uncompromising opposition to Hitler and the principal architect of the British-Soviet Pact, and to replace his leadership by alternative combinations more amenable to their dubious aims.

TO these intrigues Churchill's speech made oblique, but unmistakable reference when he chose the moment of this debate to make public the aim of Hess, representing Hitler, to replace the Churchill Government by a Government

of friends of Hitler, whom he confidently counted on finding available in influential circles in this country. Under these circumstances, whatever the differences on details of policy or on the specific composition of the Government, any other vote or any less emphatic majority or swelling of the minority would have been hailed by the Nazi press as a sign of political instability, discrediting of their arch-enemy Churchill and a victory for Hess.

BUT at the same time as this vote of confidence was given, the character of the debate made clear the concern of widely representative sections of opinion to see decisive changes in a number of spheres, especially with regard to the composition of the Government, the organisation of production, policy in relation to India and the colonial peoples, and the conduct of strategy. Had the procedure permitted a vote to be taken on the demand, not for a declaration of no confidence, but for a strengthened composition of the Government, it is likely that a free vote on this issue would have shown a substantial majority. The concession of a Ministry of Production before the end of the debate was widely regarded as an expression of readiness to consider the justice of these representations, and to proceed to some measure of necessary changes, once the threat of a revolt had been removed and the issue of confidence settled.

IN fact, however, no further change of importance has so far taken place in any of the vital spheres raised in the debate. The value of the establishment of a Minister (not a Ministry) of Production has been in great part weakened by the conditions and limitations under which it has been established; it represents a co-ordinating office for negotiations with the United States and the Soviet Union on questions of supply, but not any basic change in domestic organisation or recognition of the necessity for single planning

and control. In some respects it represents a step backwards, especially by the further strengthening of the stranglehold of the monopolists in the controls through the return of their principal representative, Sir Andrew Duncan, to the key position of Supply, with added powers to act for the Minister of Production in the absences of his touring chief.

THERE has been a reshuffle, but no change yet in the composition of the Government. The reactionary policy in relation to India continues, even with the war at the gates of India ; it remains to be seen whether the visit of Chiang Kai Shek will prove the prelude to a modification of policy. Above all, there has been no sign of a reconsideration of the whole approach to strategy, especially as expressed in the "wait till 1943" line and the refusal of the Second Front in Europe, in relation to the increasing urgency of the war situation and the crucial issue of the spring offensive. All these questions therefore return with increased urgency, in the light of the reverses in the Far East and Africa, the continued weaknesses on the home front, and the intensification of the battlefield in Europe.

WHAT are the issues which now call for decision ? First and foremost is the central question of strategy and the conduct of the war, the perspective in relation to 1942 and to the Soviet strategy for combined victory over Hitler in 1942. The practical expression of this issue, now more urgent than ever, is the question of the Second Front on the European continent, which already in the beginning of November of last year, Stalin declared "must appear in the nearest future." To-day, after three months, the Prime Minister's speech on January 27 very sharply denounced the "clamour" for a Second Front in Europe—as if it were a "clamour" of an ignorant rabble, and coolly ignoring the explicit, serious and

repeated statements of Stalin on the question—and declared that it would have meant "another and far worse Dunkirk." This estimate reveals the gulf between the ruling conceptions still prevalent in official circles here and the realities of the present position.

IN the same speech the Prime Minister declared that the maximum number of men on the British side directly engaged in Libya had been 45,000, and that 60,000 men had been concentrated at Singapore, or a total of 105,000 directly engaged on these fronts. The revelation of these figures, considerably lower than previous unofficial computations (the Libyan figure, for example, representing about one-fifth of what Rumania has put in the field against the Soviet Union), inevitably gave rise to questionings as to what was being done with the remainder of the millions of the British armed forces, and what part they were taking in the war, alongside the superhuman efforts of the Soviet forces holding and driving back nine-tenths of the Nazi military machine and its vassals. This was the query which has been exploited by disruptive critics in the United States with their repeated interrogation, "Where is the British Army ?" just as similar disruptive critics in this country have pressed the question, "Where is the American Navy ?" (repeated in the outburst of the Ontario Premier, Hepburn).

THE immediate answer to these queries of the disruptive enemies of the alliance is manifest. The overwhelming bulk of the British armed forces is being held back from action in accordance with the conceptions of a defensive strategy. They are being held in readiness, partly for the defence of this island, and mainly for the defence of the Middle East, for the Army of the Nile, for the countries of the Middle East, and especially for the great concentration for the defence of the Caucasus. (General Wavell's address to the

Indian troops last year will be remembered, informing them that they would shortly be fighting in the Caucasus, "on a long front from the Caspian Sea to the Nile") (i.e., assuming Soviet defeat as a foregone conclusion). This was the "front from the Levant to the Caspians" described by Churchill to which he says the Government accorded "priority in modern aircraft, in tanks, and in anti-aircraft and anti-tank artillery." Hence the shortage elsewhere.

WHAT does this mean? The bulk of the troops and the bulk of the best and most modern equipment were sent to a front which never materialised, because it was assumed that the Soviet Union would collapse. This was the fatal error to which Noel Baker made reference in the same debate when he said that the Government would have sent more help to the Soviet Union "but for the disastrous advice which they received about the power of Russia to resist." This was the same fatal error which was revealed in Churchill's reference to the Soviet advance as "unhoped for, undreamed of by us because we little knew the Russian strength." This was the error which underlay the reference to another Dunkirk as the supposed inevitable consequence of fighting in a parallel front with the Soviet Union for ally, as if the Soviet Union were another France. Therefore, everything was spent on the hypothetical defence of the Caucasus in these critical months. Therefore, there was shortage of supplies, and only a few antiquated aeroplanes for the Far East. Therefore, there was shortage of supplies for Libya. Therefore, there was refusal of the Second Front in the West. *The refusal of the Second Front in the West last autumn was based on a gigantic strategic error which is now admitted.* The utter misjudgment and under-estimation of the Soviet Union has been the curse of British policy through all these years, from the days of the trials

of the Fifth Column in the U.S.S.R., through Spain, through Munich, through Finland, and now even under the present profoundly altered conditions, when the lesson of the Anglo-Soviet Pact has at last been learned, it still continues to exercise its baleful influence.

BUT this under-estimation still continues to-day, in the present refusal of the Second Front in the West and ignoring of the Soviet strategy for victory in 1942. When Churchill made his analogy with Dunkirk, the underlying thought was revealed. For Dunkirk was the disastrous consequence of the collapse of an ally, the disappearance of the French Army, the passing over of the French State to the other side. How is it possible to make such an analogy for a partnership with the advancing Soviet Armies, combining in a common offensive for the destruction of Hitlerism? When the Soviet Armies were hard pressed in the autumn and in need of every help, it was considered impossible to come to their assistance by taking on the remaining tenth of the Nazi forces, the twenty-five inferior divisions holding the whole of the seething populations of Western Europe. How does that argument apply now, when the Soviet Armies press forward their advance, when the very best of the Nazi troops have been slaughtered, when Europe is a volcano, when a combined front could finish off Hitler?

IN the last war, in the bloody battles of the Somme, the British Army in the West had to face in the five months between July and November, 1916, no less than 499,000 casualties, or more than twenty-seven times the 18,000 casualties of the Libyan campaign. But they held ninety German divisions. The population of the United Kingdom was then five millions less; they had had only two years of war to prepare; they had had to face heavier losses than now during those two years; the United States was not an

ally. To-day it is held impossible to meet twenty-five divisions of the weakened German forces, with the Soviet Armies conducting the main offensive, and with the whole Nazi regime beginning to approach the final days of its power. Is it surprising that *The Times* Moscow correspondent reports of feeling in the Soviet Union :—

It would be unwise to ignore a certain disappointment that Britain is not taking a more direct part in operations against Germany. The Red Army is now engaged in blunting the weapon which Hitler is preparing for his spring campaigning, and its success in that direction is indicated by the fact that the Germans have had to bring up so many reserves. . . . On the Russian front it will be some six or seven weeks before Hitler can find campaigning weather on any sector. These weeks are likely to be of the highest importance in future Anglo-Soviet relations. . . . The feeling remains that, for one reason or another, Britain is not seizing an opportunity which may not be repeated, to add her full weight to the blows which Russia is striking at Germany (*The Times*, February 14, 1942).

In place of active collaboration we find the characteristic phenomenon that, just as the period of the Red Army's retreat was accompanied by speculations on the prospect of Soviet collapse or defection, so the period of the Red Army's advance is accompanied by new speculations from the same quarters about the character of the post-war settlement, the supposed menace of a Soviet domination of Europe, the necessity to make a strong stand for Anglo-American participation, not in the fighting, but in the settlement after victory. Lord Reith makes the remarkable statement for the Government :—

I am not frightened about the war ; but I am frightened—and I think that some of your lordships are—about the peace and what will happen when the war ends (Lord Reith, House of Lords, February 11, 1942).

Lord Halifax, in his speech at Springfield on February 11, declares that “the present partnership of the American and British peoples” must play the decisive role in the future organisation of the world : “If we (Britain and the United States) can hold together, the world can

take fresh heart”; and “on the resources, valour, skill and energy of these United States largely, perhaps principally, hangs the future of an entire way of life.”

THE *National News-Letter*, associated with Commander King-Hall, spreads allegations about Stalin demanding of Eden the imposition of a Communist Germany and a Communist France as terms of settlement—just the kind of propaganda Goebbels would like to see spread in this country and the United States. President Roosevelt's National Economic Committee has come out with its conception of a basic war aim in its Final Report just published :—

It will avail us nothing to carry a gigantic defence programme to a successful conclusion if in so doing we lose sight of the basic philosophy of our American economy—a competitive system and private capitalism (United States Congress Temporary National Economic Committee, Final Report and Recommendations).

IT is obvious that this kind of controversy on ultimate aims of the post-war world, if brought forward as a substitute for present practical tasks, can only be helpful to the enemy by suggesting unnecessary divisions in the anti-Fascist front. This is not only a question of carving up the tiger's skin, when the task is still to kill the tiger. It is also a question of hampering, not helping, the killing of the tiger, by conjuring up and provoking suggestions of division and distrust between the allies, when the fullest unity between the allies is essential for victory, just as the fullest united collaboration will be necessary for a peaceful world settlement.

THE immediate practical task is the fullest collaboration in the present urgent fight for victory, alongside the fullest collaboration in the political and diplomatic field for the mobilisation of the support of all the peoples in the fight for liberation against Nazi tyranny. This requires the maximum effort alike in production and in the military field ; the

co-ordination of strategy ; and the speediest preparation of the Second Front on the Continent to combine with the Soviet drive for victory in 1942. In his recent speeches and broadcast Sir Stafford Cripps has brought to the forefront the urgency of the situation and the Soviet conception of victory in 1942 as no Utopian aspiration, but a practical possibility. He has further stressed the necessity of continued British-Soviet collaboration in the settlement of Europe, pointing out the danger of Britain being "out of the picture" if terms are not reached now: "It would be better to do it now than after the Russians get to Berlin ; if we do it now we shall be less out of the picture. . . . We must have a firm policy with the Soviet Union ; we must get a concrete picture and get them to agree to that picture."

THIS necessity of British-Soviet collaboration in the settlement of

Europe after victory is of vital importance, no less than the continuance of British-American-Soviet-Chinese collaboration for the future of world peace. At the same time it is evident that the path to this lies, not merely through negotiations on the terms of a settlement after victory, but on collaboration in action in winning the victory. There will be no danger of Britain being "out of the picture" in the settlement of Europe, if British and Soviet forces will have collaborated in action on the fields of Europe in jointly crushing the Nazi regime from the West and from the East. In other words, the logic of the argument, no less than of the stressing of the urgency of the position, leads to the necessity of the Second Front in Europe, on which, as on the other controversial questions of the present phase, Sir Stafford Cripps has not yet, at the time of writing, expressed his position. We stand for the fullest collaboration of Britain and the Soviet Union in the settlement of Europe ;

but the first task is for them to collaborate in defeating Hitler—and this requires the Second Front, the urgency of which is now greater than ever.

THE second issue, which is bound up with the first and is of no less paramount importance, is that of production. We cannot tolerate the continuance of a position which cripples and paralyses the action of this country in every field, and subjects its fighters to needless sacrifices or impossible odds, not through inevitable shortages, but through sheer failure to organise the existing productive resources to the best advantage and cut through the jungle of sectional interests, monopolist strangleholds and business privilege inherited from a peacetime restrictive economy, and carried straight over into the existing controls. After all the sunshine pictures of improvement have been continually given at successive intervals now for many years, every practical testing in the hour of need again and again reveals the most desperate shortage of actual output ; every production engineer has testified to the glaring discrepancy between what could be produced, given a rational scientific system of organisation, and what is produced ; every worker is aware of the failure to use to the full existing plant, tools and labour. Every one is agreed that there is something radically wrong, and that a change must be made. Nor is there in fact any wide divergence of informed opinion as to what needs to be done, if a unified system of organisation is to be established ; it is the opposition of the interests that stands in the way.

IN the parliamentary debate at the end of January Shinwell stated that the total supplies to the Soviet Union up to that date did not amount to more than one thousand tanks and one thousand planes. In his reply the Prime Minister quoted this figure and stated that he would not confirm or deny it, but that

even half that amount would have made all the difference in Libya or the Far East. It is only necessary to compare the scale of these figures, in the third year of war and the seventh year of rearmament, with the Nazi output, when they entered on the assault on the Soviet Union with thirty thousand tanks, or with their reported monthly output of three and a half to six thousand planes, to see how inadequate is the present position. It is difficult to believe that a great industrial country, once the workshop of the world, and still possessed of first-class industrial plant and equipment (not all destroyed or dismantled yet by our monopolists) and a highly-skilled working population, should continue to consent to this self-strangling of its productive powers, because the economic dictators who have paralysed its life during the past two decades, and who have been the counterparts of the Munichites (often in fact the same figures) in the political field, continue in control.

THE establishment of a Minister of Production is only a first step forward, and not yet the solution of the problem. The White Paper and Beaverbrook's speech have made abundantly clear that what is envisaged is no real change in the system of organisation, but only the appointment of a cheer-leader, invigorator and umpire. Confusion has been caused by the expression of the demand for a unified system as the demand for a Minister of Production, because the establishment of such a unified system would necessarily require for its head and parliamentary spokesman a Minister of Production. But the appointment of a Minister of Production is no more in itself equivalent to the establishment of a unified system than the appointment of a Minister for Air is equivalent to the establishment of an Air Force. At the best, it can only be the beginning of an approach to the problem. What is required is not a superman or economic

Napoleon to perform miracles by the magic of his personality, but the far more prosaic and laborious necessity of a unified machinery of control, independent of private business interests, to replace the existing chaos, and operating through executive Regional Boards, directly controlling the enterprises in their region, to which the managements are responsible. The constructive proposals for what is necessary have been set out in the newly published Communist Party memorandum on production, the main points of which are summarised in the article of John Austin in this issue. An active campaign will need to be carried on for the adoption of these proposals.

THE third issue which now stands in the forefront is that of India. Here at long last opinion is awakening to the urgent necessity of steps being taken to end the present position and establish the basis of free and equal co-operation with the national leadership of the four hundred millions of India for the common tasks of the present struggle. What is the obstacle? The outlook of the entire Indian national movement is overwhelmingly anti-Fascist, is bound by the closest ties of solidarity to China, and seeks only an honourable basis of co-operation in a struggle whose urgency is as obvious to them as it is to the people of this country. The main obstacle is still the obstinate resistance of anti-democratic reaction in this country, which even in this hour of crisis still seeks to cling to outworn forms of domination which are in fact dissolving their Empire into thin air, refuses to recognise India as a nation and refuses to negotiate with the chosen leadership and elected representatives of the Indian people (elected with a far more overwhelming majority than ever the National Government was in this country) as their rightful representatives. The persistent endeavour to regard the Congress leadership as an extremist hand^l to be

balanced against and treated on an equality with half a dozen artificially created splinter organisations without representative basis, and then on the grounds of this transparent trickery to proclaim triumphantly a "deadlock," is to play with politics in a serious situation. Immediate steps need to be taken to enter into negotiations with the Congress leadership in order to establish, with their agreement, a widely representative National Government with full authority ; and the unity of India will be abundantly revealed behind such a National Government for the fullest mobilisation in the present struggle.

FINALLY the question of the Government and of the controlling positions in this country must be firmly tackled. The Prime Minister in his broadcast appealed for national unity in the hour of crisis, and urged the example of the Soviet Union as a model for the people of this country in the example they have shown of unshakable national unity behind their Government under the severest ordeals ever faced by any nation. But the national unity of the Soviet people, which has revealed itself in the inability of the Nazis to discover a single Quisling, has only been possible because they have ruthlessly eliminated every weak element from every commanding position, because they dealt with their Fifth Column in time, and did not hesitate to put generals and highly-placed politicians on trial even in peacetime

before they could do further damage, and built up a Government in which they could have complete and tested confidence. The same cannot yet be said of the position here.

IT is no use seeking to exploit the plea of national unity as a cloak for the protection of those in whom the people rightly have no confidence. The Government needs to be purged and reorganised. Every ruling position in the High Command, the services and in industry needs to be checked. New elements representative of the democratic anti-Fascist forces of the people need to be brought forward. The necessity of a small and strengthened War Cabinet is now universally recognised. But the question of the Government is not only a question of personnel ; it is at the same time a question of programme. We need a Government which will carry out the urgent measures of the present hour : the full mobilisation of the people, the fullest organisation of production, without regard to vested interests, the effective co-ordination of strategy with the Soviet Union and the other partners of the alliance, the freeing of India, the speediest organisation of the Second Front, the direction of the entire strategy for the common aim of victory in 1942. Such a Government will win the united support of the people, because they will recognise in it a Government to lead them to victory against Fascism.

15th February, 1942.

R. P. D.

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World War Survey

A strategy for victory

by WILLIAM RUST

THE central feature of the world situation is the continued growth of the democratic front against Fascism, both in terms of political unity and military resources. The long sought for coalition of Britain, America, the Soviet Union and China has at last come into existence, arraying military and economic resources against Fascism which are overwhelmingly superior although not yet fully mobilised, creating a new sense of power among the people of the democratic countries, and bringing new hope to the millions subjected to the jackboot of Hitlerite Germany.

But the Grand Coalition, which emerged only after a colossal struggle, still bears the marks of its long travail. The outstanding political weakness is the failure to mobilise the colonial peoples, above all the Indian masses, for the anti-Fascist fight. The outstanding military weakness is the failure to recognise the decisive strategic significance of concentrated military blows against the Nazi forces in Europe, aimed at an early and victorious conclusion of the war.

Is there, in fact, a grand strategy corresponding to the might of the Grand Coalition? Certainly, a world plan is pieced together, and sectional interests are being gradually submerged; the present situation can in no way be compared with that of eight months ago when official British opinion measured the length of Soviet resistance in days and weeks, and America trembled between Lease-Lend and belligerency. A long road has been travelled since then, but the goal of strategic unity has not yet been reached.

The world picture as it unfolds itself from day to day is changing, complicated and uneven, and it is not easy to grasp its full sweep. Naval power in the Pacific was wrenched from Anglo-American control in a few hours, and the Libya scene was transformed in as many days. These are serious defeats, with effects extending far beyond the area of combat, and bringing considerable relief to the Axis powers, but

exercising only a secondary influence on the outcome of the war.

The decisive centre of the war is the Eastern Front; this is where the main forces of the Fascist enemy are engaged, and this is where they are being systematically driven back and destroyed.

The only sure road to the overthrow of Hitlerite Germany is the complete defeat and rout of the German army in the field. So long as the German army remains in existence as a fighting force the Fascist menace to civilisation remains, no matter what happens to Mussolini's Roman Empire and the Japanese co-prosperity sphere. The Axis powers are unable to turn their Pacific and Libyan gains to decisive account precisely because their power of manoeuvre has been crippled by the blows inflicted on the military and political might of the Nazis by the Red Army.

Those who doubt this need only to conjure up what the effects of Libya and the Pacific would have been on the background of Nazi victories at Leningrad, Moscow and Rostov to realise how terrifyingly dangerous the situation in Britain would have become.

This significance of the epic struggle now being waged by the Red Army on the Eastern Front is recognised, in part, by Churchill and Roosevelt. But only in part. For various reasons they have not yet drawn the conclusions, reached with such dramatic clarity by our Soviet ally, that victory is within our grasp this year providing the blows against the retreating Nazis are kept up, and the projected Hitlerite offensive in the spring either frustrated or turned into a smashing defeat.

When Churchill, demanding his vote of confidence in January, referred to the Red Army advance as "unhoped for, undreamed of by us," he was revealing an estimation far removed from that held by Stalin, who had been all along systematically preparing and shrewdly calculating down to the hour and day when the counter-offensive would be launched.

Neither did Roosevelt err on the side of optimism when he limited himself to the estimation in October last that Hitler "can be stopped and can be compelled to dig in." How dearly Hitler wishes at this moment that he could dig in!

"On November 6 and 7, at a moment when it seemed that the German Army had achieved its greatest successes at the approaches to the capital," wrote Kalinin in an article estimating two months of the offensive, "Stalin confidently called upon our army and the whole Soviet people to inflict utter defeat on the invaders. My words are inadequate to describe the effect of Stalin's speech on our population and the army. I can only say that our strength seemed to redouble. One hopes that the response of millions of Soviet people may one day be embodied in a masterpiece of literature. It was one of the most remarkable events in the history of the war."

In the same speech, Stalin made his famous statement on the necessity for the establishment of a Second Front on the continent of Europe, adding this call to us to the words of inspiration he uttered to the Soviet people, who are to-day reaping the fruits of audacity. Our Government hesitated, counted the risks and decided to postpone action. If Churchill, in November, could have foreseen where the Red Army would have been by February, would he have then rejected the Second Front as a hopeless adventure?

On the other hand, there is no mistaking the positive attitude that has been shown towards the Soviet Union within the limits of the Churchill-Roosevelt strategical conception. After the overcoming of the initial delays preceding the Three Power Conference in Moscow, the British and American Governments have insisted on the fulfilment of the promises of material aid to the Soviet Union despite the resistance of vested interests and reactionary groupings. This opposition has been especially marked of late as a result of the crisis in the Pacific, which caused the Empire bondholders suddenly to whip up a campaign to divert supplies to the Far East and Australia, regardless of the diminution of supplies to the Soviet Union. This attempted "putsch" by the bondholders was vigorously backed (and combined with vicious anti-Soviet propaganda) by a number of Dominion reaction-

aries and Isolationist groupings in America.

This attempt to switch Anglo-American strategy is much more than an example of the desperation of the Empire blood-suckers (who have now been hit fair and square by their own appeasement boom-crang); it reveals the strength of the pro-Fascist forces and the swiftness with which they utilise any difference of opinion in order to weaken the alliance with the Soviet Union and to pave the way for an understanding with the Axis.

There is every indication that the American Isolationists have again plucked up their courage and are now doing all in their power to sabotage the American war effort, and to break the Grand Coalition, by advancing the specious plea that Japan is the only enemy.

The clipping of the Churchill-Roosevelt war wings is now a favourite endeavour of certain circles, both in Britain and America, and it is this counterplay of forces within the democratic Governments that is frequently responsible for what appears to be indecision and even paralysis. A state of affairs that is accentuated when those elements who are strongly for Soviet co-operation themselves make the mistake of underestimating the Red Army and mistakenly adhere to old-fashioned conceptions of strategy and methods of economic organisation. There is no real way out of this situation until the Government is completely reconstructed and shorn of all those tainted with Munichism.

With this background we can turn to a brief examination of the main battle-grounds of the world struggle: (1) the Eastern Front, (2) the Pacific, (3) the Near and Middle East, and (4) the Battle of the Atlantic. The inter-connection of these fronts has been forcibly demonstrated by the successes attending Japanese aggression in the Pacific, which have increased the strain on Allied navies and mercantile shipping, provided Japan with valuable raw materials, and deprived Britain and America of them, and opened the possibility of the Japanese Navy operating in the Indian Ocean. Such a development would menace the Allied supplies transported via the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and greatly strengthen the Axis concentration against the Near and Middle East.

Now that the fall of Singapore gives the Japanese an undisputed right of way through the Malacca Strait they will probably attempt naval operations in the Indian Ocean, including the blockade of Rangoon, while continuing their threatening moves against Australia. So far the Japanese advances have taken place very much according to plan, and may have even exceeded their own expectations, as they could hardly have anticipated that two British battleships would have been sent without protective aircraft, although Tokyo was well informed, of course, about the rotten state of affairs at Pearl Harbour.

The turning of the tables on Japan will be a long job, requiring that heavy concentration of naval power which obviously cannot be spared from the Atlantic and the Mediterranean until the operations against the Axis forces in Europe and North Africa have reached a much more advanced stage. When that day comes the cutting of the Japanese long oceanic lines, which link up the widely scattered land forces, will be achieved with calamitous rapidity.

This does not mean that the only task of the Allied forces in the Pacific is to sit and wait for better days. It is necessary to provide them with more men and equipment to defend every inch of ground, to fight delaying actions (like that of General MacArthur in the Philippines), and above all to prevent the Japanese land forces from establishing themselves in key positions in Burma, India and Australia. Moreover, the seasoned armies of Chiang Kai-Shek are in a position to wage a heavy fight against the Japanese, both in Burma and China, and can inflict grievous blows on the aggressors.

Incidentally, the thoughtful observer will not overlook the significance of the fact that democracy's decisive land forces in both Europe and the East are the popular armies of Russia and China.

But so long as India is held in chains, and no steps are taken to bring about a fighting alliance with the Indian masses, the dice are loaded in favour of Japan. Whitehall's colonial die-hardism towards India is worth more to the Japanese than all their victories at Pearl Harbour, Hong Kong and Singapore.

The vital importance of the Middle East stronghold has been underlined by the way in which the Libya see-saw has coincided with the threatened appearance of Japanese naval forces at the other end of the Red Sea. Also, the press is again full of rumours about a projected Hitler sweep through Turkey and Egypt, aimed at the oil wells of Iran and Iraq. But from all accounts the Middle East is a well-garrisoned centre; Anglo-Soviet co-operation in Iran also strengthens the defences of the Caucasus. There is room for concern, but not for anxiety.

But is the Middle East to remain a defensive zone, a mere Empire strong point? This question is put in view of the failure of the Libyan offensive, which has landed us in an as-you-were position. The launching of the offensive aroused high hopes because the official statements gave good grounds to believe that the days of racing backwards and forwards across the desert were over, and that the expected occupation of Tripoli would provide a jumping-off ground against Italy, leading to the creation of a Second Front in Europe. A strengthening of the Allied naval position in the Mediterranean was the very least that was anticipated.

The real gains, however, could be measured with a thimble; not because of objective difficulties or because the entire operation was a gamble, but because of military ineptitude. The imperial forces were driven back from El Agheila by superior fighting tactics, equipment and rear organisation. There are new lessons to be learned in field tactics and tank production. And if it is possible for the Red Army to learn so quickly in the short space of months, it is surely possible for our own forces to do the same.

The job in Libya is to return to the fray, and to ensure that the next offensive is mounted with a much larger force, equipped with heavier tanks and an effective repair service. Passivity would be fatal to the defence of the Suez Canal. Moreover, passivity breeds demoralisation and is the handmaiden of the enemy.

The Battle of the Atlantic, which is part of the Battle of Europe, is undoubtedly at the point of intensification. Any belief that it had already been won has been rudely dispelled by the escape of the

Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, which are now able to recommence their marauding activities at the moment of the heaviest strain on the Anglo-American naval forces.

On the Eastern Front the gathering tempo of the Soviet offensive continues to surprise official opinion in this country, and the majority of commentators still reckon on a Nazi recovery. It is a remarkable fact that, with few exceptions, the press treats with polite disbelief the Soviet view that this will be the year of victory, and continues to feature Anglo-American prognostications of what will happen in 1944 and 1945. Popular opinion tends to be over-confident and to under-estimate the stubbornness of the fight that the Red Army has had to wage ; but official opinion, although shifting its ground, has yet to realise the full magnitude of the Soviet achievement.

This is shown in the various comments on the spring offensive which the Nazis are loudly promising themselves. These comments, which vary from moderate optimism to extreme pessimism, are interesting in themselves, but much more significant is the absence of comment on the officially declared Soviet intention to maintain the initiative, to keep Hitler's main forces engaged, and to prevent him from gaining the respite necessary for the mounting of the spring offensive. A Red staff officer writes :—

Not to delay for an instant, to move forward without stopping—such is the task of the Soviet troops. The sooner we break the enemy's defence in its entire depth, the sooner will we emerge on vantage ground which will give us wide space for manoeuvre. We must exert all efforts to ensure the utter defeat of the enemy in 1942. The Red Army cannot give the enemy respite. Without pausing for rest it must advance and drive westward. (*Soviet War News*, February 5.)

The reference to "wide space for manoeuvre" is also a reminder that the greater freedom of movement that the spring conditions will bring does not operate only to the advantage of the Nazis, as some authorities assume.

The second major calculation of the Soviet Government is that the military victories will be followed by the break-up of the morale of the German Army and a gathering revolt in Germany itself as the people realise into what disasters they have been plunged by the Hitler gangsters. And to achieve this there is being waged

a propaganda as deadly in its effect as bombs and bullets. Over the Soviet wireless come the voices of German Members of Parliament, trade union leaders, artists and writers, calling on the German people to fight tooth and nail against the war and to destroy Hitler and his gang of butchers.

The determination to maintain the offensive and the call for the organisation of an open mass struggle against the Nazis in Germany itself is the clear proof that the Soviet Government is resolutely putting into practice its call for victory in 1942.

Where does Britain and America stand in reply to that call ?

The time has come to re-cast Anglo-American strategy in accordance with the new world situation created by the Soviet victories on the Eastern Front, and to embark upon a plan, based upon a much closer co-operation between the three powers, which will ensure the heaviest possible concentration of Allied resources against the Nazi forces in Europe. This is the most urgent strategical question of the day.

This means energetic preparation now for the establishment of a Second Front in Europe so that the Anglo-American forces (with the assistance of the enslaved peoples) will be able to hammer the German Army from the West while it is being driven back in the East. This is how the question of the Second Front stands to-day ; it is no longer a question of attacking in the West only in order to relieve the pressure in the East, but of attacking in the West in order to further consolidate the victories in the East and to achieve the common victory in a measurable period.

The opponents of the Second Front will reply to this pleading with a flood of arguments. But examine them all and rule out those arising from faint-heartedness and Munichism, and it will be found that the serious objections are all based on the existing bad state of production. How can we invade the continent when we are not yet in a position to produce enough arms for the existing fronts ? And to this question there is, and can be, only one answer : the arms for victory must be produced, for without them we shall perish. Through co-operation with America and by means of radical changes in the organisation of industry, production

can be stepped up to the required level. Under the stimulus of battle all things are possible.

The Red Army will not be able to deliver victory to the British people on a silver plate; we have got to fight for it ourselves. And to do this we need in the sphere of strategy to cast away purely imperial considerations, which have now been proven to be bankrupt. The defence of certain Empire key positions, plus the utilisation of the power of the Navy and the operation of the blockade in order to bring about the internal collapse of the enemy has been proven, to put it mildly, quite insufficient.

The policy of bombing Germany into submission has turned out a fiasco despite all the flamboyant promises of its advocates.

A Just War

A Speech by

NIKOLAEVA*

COMRADES, every honest human being, man and woman alike, should understand that the war of freedom-loving peoples of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the Allies is a just war for the complete rout of the German bandits, for the liberation of the enslaved peoples from the yoke of Hitlerite Germany.

When the German bandits attacked the Soviet Union, they had not properly considered what exactly the land of Soviets was, or the character of our people. But our people are possessed of a firm and determined character. If an enemy attacks our country, then the whole people and our valiant Red Army fight and continue to fight the enemy mercilessly, wipe out and continue to wipe out the enemy, so that all desire to invade our Soviet land will be knocked out of them for all time.

The German invaders wanted to have a war of annihilation, and they have indeed got it. And may the German people reproach themselves for allowing Hitler and his band to invade foreign lands.

The German invaders have forgotten that our Soviet people are possessed of an indomitable will for victory. Under the wise guidance of the great army

To-day Britain must draw the lessons of its military defeats, boldly recast its strategy and strike at the enemy while there is yet time. A real sense of urgency must be created in this country, especially as the future course of the war will be largely determined by the outcome of the fighting in Europe during the next two months.

The war must be waged as a people's war and British strategy must be based on our alliance with the Soviet Union. The only way to speedy victory is through the fulfilment of our obligations to fight on the continent of Europe, jointly with the Soviet Union, for the destruction of the German Army and the overthrow of Hitlerite Germany.

leader, Comrade Stalin, our troops are pressing forward, wiping out the enemy hordes. Liberating our Soviet soil before the eyes of our people, they are raising up again the burned towns and villages. Thousands of bodies of peaceful inhabitants, brutally tortured children, raped and tortured women! Plunder, rapine, treasures of culture and monuments of the past desecrated by the bestial paws of the Hitlerites!

They came like the Black Plague. They came and drank our blood, seized our cattle and burned our homes. They outraged young and old alike.

"They dragged your wife from her homestead with their filthy brigand hands,

Tortured her to unconsciousness and,
In the morning . . . good-bye . . .
they finished her off!"

In these words of our poet, Isakovsky, is expressed all the barbarity, the mockery of the German brigands against the population of our motherland, against our women, against the wealth which was the fruits of our labours.

* From the speech delivered by Madame Nikolaeva to the Conference called by the London Trades Council at the Empress Stadium, London, on January 25, 1942.

We have proof of these words in numerous documents written by the German bandits themselves. This is what Senior-Corporal Tanrittel writes :—

The more you kill, the easier it becomes. To-day I helped to clear up a camp. We shot 82 people in all. Among them was a beautiful woman. We took her off to a barn; she bit and scratched. Forty minutes later we shot her.

And here is what another brigand, Lieutenant Tafna, writes :—

The Russians have turned out to be devils; we have to bind them up. I liked all this fuss at first, but now that I'm bitten and scratched all over I adopt simpler methods—use my revolver. This cools them off. Just between ourselves an incident happened here unprecedented elsewhere. A Russian girl blew up herself and Senior-Lieutenant Gross. Now we strip them naked and make a proper search; then, afterwards, they just vanish, leaving no trace.

What a store of insolence, shamelessness, foulness and bestiality these brutes have! One German soldier, Heinz Muller, in whom a spark of human consciousness broke through all these brutalities, wrote to his sweetheart :—

I curse the day I was born a German. I am horrified at the life in the German Army in Russia. Immorality, plunder, violence, murder. Old people, women and children are being annihilated. Simply murdered. That is why the Russians defend themselves with such extraordinary courage.

The German rulers do everything to prevent such letters from reaching the German people, sweethearts, wives and mothers.

I want to appeal not only to you, but to all women in Great Britain. Nature endowed us women with fine feelings of motherhood, and it is natural that every woman, irrespective of her nationality, political convictions, religious faith and social status, should guard these noble feelings.

Is it possible that the women of Germany do not know that Hitler has taken their children from them and trained them to be brigands, branded with the swastika and ordered them to kill, rape and plunder!

Can it be that these mothers and wives do not know that by order of Hitler and his generals, their husbands, sons, brothers are perpetrating such unprecedented outrages?

All this is bringing nearer the doom of the German brigands. The German people

have covered themselves with shame, with a shame that will go down in the history of the German people as the shameful page in the black period of Hitler's power.

The land is groaning under the horrors which the German invaders bring in their train. History will never forget this. History has pronounced its verdict and the Soviet people, together with all freedom-loving peoples of the world, will carry this sentence into execution.

In the grave days of war, the women of the Soviet Union have understood perfectly well the role they have to play, and they greet all women who are aware of their position and of the part they have to play in the struggle against Hitlerism. To-day, when our motherland is in danger, millions of Soviet women on all sectors of the rear and the front are selflessly working shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk in defence of their magnificent motherland for the rout of the German barbarians.

Soviet women have displayed tremendous heroism at the front as nurses. Soviet women understand full well that for victory over the enemy, tanks, planes, guns, machine guns, shells and all essential armaments are necessary. And so, equally with the men, they are working on production, taking the places of those who go into the Red Army.

There can be no war without armaments; everybody without exception should understand this. Some people understand war as being a man's business; this is wrong. The women should labour especially in wartime when it is a question of defending the motherland, of helping the army fighting for the liberation of peoples from under Hitlerite tyranny. Soviet people are confident of victory and we Soviet women, together with the whole of the Soviet people, are confident of victory and do our utmost to help forge victory over the enemy.

And we want you and all the people of Great Britain to be filled with the same hatred for the accursed enemy of all mankind, Hitlerism, as we are, and with the same confidence in victory as we are. For this we must work hard; we must strengthen to the utmost the ties of friendship between peoples.

Long live the friendship of the peoples of Great Britain and the U.S.S.R.!

Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Unity

by WILL LAWTHER

[Will Lawther is a member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and President of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain]

THE visit of the delegation of leading Soviet Trade Unionists in January and February has been an inspiration to all who came in contact with them. In pit and factory, wherever they went, their appearance was a visible sign of growing Anglo-Soviet co-operation and was followed immediately by an increase in production. It was the first of what we may hope will be such a frequent interchange of trade union experience as will bring the workers of the two countries more and more closely together.

For many years we have had a regular interchange with other countries, especially with Canada and the United States. This winter, when I was delegated by the Trade Union Congress to go to the U.S.A. it was borne in upon me, in meeting after meeting all over that great country, how valuable such interchange of trade union delegates can be in cementing the working class of the English-speaking countries in the struggle against Fascism.

But the visit of the Soviet trade unionists to Britain was something special, arising from a need far beyond ordinary fraternal relations. In face of the common danger, our two Trade Union movements have entered into a solemn agreement. An Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee has come into existence, and the October statement of its tasks concluded with the clause :—

Strengthening of personal contact between the representatives of the Trade Union movements of the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain through the All-Union Council of Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. and the British Trades Union Congress (Point 8 of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Agreement).

It was in accordance with this that the Soviet delegation accepted the invitation of the British Trade Union Congress to send representatives of the Soviet trade unions to Great Britain. The purpose of the delegation was to acquaint itself with the struggle of the British people against Hitlerism, and to impart information about the struggle of the Soviet people

against Nazi Germany. Our fellow trade unionists—Shvernink, Nikolaeva and the others—have done their job well and truly, thoroughly investigating here, making us fully acquainted with the struggle over there, and telling us straight what they found lacking here, as well as what they found to admire.

I want to deal particularly with what they said about our unused reserves—reserves of materials, machines and manpower—for this coincides exactly with our own experience and observation.

We have to realise what a tremendous responsibility lies upon us as trade unionists in Britain. All that we have striven for, all the gains of the working class for over a century, is at stake in the issue of the conflict; and that issue depends on us. We have pledged ourselves to give “every assistance to the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and of Great Britain in their common war for the defeat of Hitlerite Germany” (Point 2 of Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Agreement).

We have pledged ourselves to :—

Strengthen the industrial efforts of both countries for the purpose of the utmost extension of the production of tanks, aeroplanes, guns, shells and other munitions (Point 3 of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Agreement).

And finally, we have given our pledge of assistance :—

In rendering maximum help to the Soviet Union in armaments on the part of Great Britain (Point 4 of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Agreement).

Is it fully realised that in this grim struggle trade unionism is no longer limited to questions of wages and hours, but has taken on a wider scope and greater responsibility? To be a good trade unionist at the moment means also to be putting forward every ounce of individual and collective effort to carry these pledges through. Those who have been elected to the General Council believe that we represented the inmost and deepest desires of the workers of this country in agreeing to

what we have undertaken. But the carrying of it out depends above all upon the mass of our fellow-workers. Therefore, every trade union official, every secretary of a lodge or branch, every man and woman in our movement should now be doing their utmost.

In this connection there are three aspects of particular importance. The first is the need of propaganda. Every leading trade unionist, from general secretaries and executive members of unions to the men elected in the shops, should be explaining what is at stake and what it is necessary should be done. It is no use pretending that this is needless, or hiding from ourselves that there are agencies at work and activities going on that hinder the war effort. What happened in France twenty months ago is beginning to be forgotten, and perhaps there are some of those whom Hess looked upon as friends who would be glad if trade union memories proved to be short. And apart from the need of combating insidious propaganda designed to split us from our allies, there is a still greater amount to be done in a positive way to stir our people to unremitting effort. We are pledged to the :—

Utilisation of all means of agitation and propaganda—Press, radio, cinema, workers' meetings, etc.—for struggle against Hitlerism.

When I made a broadcast at the beginning of February I was astonished at the volume of letters that it brought me from wireless listeners all over the country. It showed that people are particularly anxious to hear a trade union viewpoint expressed on the problems before us. This method has not been used enough by our movement, which has the right to demand that representatives of the working class, and of every section of it, should have more frequent access to the wireless. So too with other means. We should insist on the local cinemas playing a bigger part in the war effort, as well as providing the necessary recreation. And why should so many be deprived of an opportunity of seeing the magnificent films produced by our Soviet ally?

The second point is production. No one can be satisfied with the present situation in production. We are going ahead, but we could go ahead much faster if it were not for waste and hindrances. There are

man-power and resources running to waste in this country; there are hindrances in every industry, and from what I hear tell not least in engineering where a number of employers, to use the words of Mr. Lloyd George about landlords a year ago, would rather lose the war than lose their privileges. I think it is high time the trade union movement insisted that employers or managements who resist the formation of Joint Production Committees should be strictly dealt with, and that the Act that was passed in July, 1940, be applied to direct them in the way they should go.

Thirdly, I should like to take up the question of production in the mines. There is no more important branch of our war effort. Without coal, munitions and ships, transport and power, feeding and housing would be inconceivable. But without the miners there would be no coal production, and it is out of his toilsome and hazardous daily activity that there comes this fundamental raw material. This point was particularly stressed by N. Shvernik in his message to the Durham miners and, through them, to the miners of Great Britain.*

As a member of the Coal Production Committee I have every reason to know the difficulties encountered in getting maximum continuous output from the minefields. There are still coal owners who see the interests of their shareholders in such a dazzling light that they are blinded to the greater needs of the country. At the last annual conference of our federation responsible local leaders mentioned case after case in which pits were being stopped or not working full time. At the moment miners in Derbyshire and Somerset are prevented from working six days a week which they desire to do. Only a fortnight ago Mr. Pearson, of the Lanarkshire Miners' Union, was appointed to come to London with a protest from the pitmen of Lanarkshire against the closing down of three pits that were regarded as "unprofitable." It is amazing that such an attitude should persist or be allowed to persist. It takes the heart out of the mineworkers when they come across examples of hindrances

* The text of this message is given as an appendix to this article.

like this—and I have reason to know that scarcely a day passes without some such example.

But, whatever be the difficulties of this kind that we have to contend with, the difficulties of another kind that confront the Soviet miners are far greater. It is not a pleasant memory for me, who has visited it, to think of Gorlovka pit in the hands of the Nazis; but for those who worked in it it must be gall and wormwood. Therefore, whatever be the difficulties, the need is for us not to succumb to them by any slackening of our productive effort, but to take other means of overcoming them, and never for a day or an hour to give less than our very best in the production of coal.

Appendix

To the Members of the Durham Miners' Association.

Dear Comrades,

The Soviet Trade Union Delegation sends you its warmest greetings. On behalf of the working class of the Soviet Union it expresses their deepest gratitude for your fraternal solidarity expressed in your levy and contributions for the purchase of drugs and surgical instruments for our heroic Red Army.

The Delegation of the Soviet Trade Unions, during its stay in this country, has visited dozens of factories and works, coal mines and shipyards. It has spoken at dozens of meetings and has had hundreds of individual talks with working men and women. The cordial welcome which the Delegation met with everywhere testifies to the fact that the British working class understands all the seriousness of the international situation, and the necessity for further strengthening the friendship between our two countries in the struggle against Hitlerism, the enemy of the liberty and independence of peoples.

The Delegation also remarked the unanimous readiness of the British workers to do all that in them lies further to increase the productivity of labour and consequently further to raise the output of tanks, planes, guns, shells and other armaments necessary both for the Army of Great Britain and for the Red Army of the Soviet Union. The supply of the necessary armaments to the armies of our two countries is an essential condition for the complete defeat of Hitlerite Germany and for the liberation of millions of people from Fascist tyranny.

The task of raising still further the productivity of labour is one that faces not only those working men and women who are directly engaged in the manufacture of arms, *but also the entire working class, including yourselves, comrades of the British coal-mining industry. Without coal the factories cannot work. Coal is as necessary to them as the metal out of which they make the arms.*

That is why the Soviet Trade Union Delegation calls on you, and through you, on all the coal miners of Great Britain, to produce as much coal as industry requires. The Delegation expresses the hope that you will daily produce more and more coal, remembering that every additional ton of coal represents a shell fired at Hitlerite Germany and its brigand army.

More coal for the factories and the works!

The more coal they get the more weapons they will turn out for our allied armies!

Long live the friendship of the working class of Great Britain and the Soviet Union!

On behalf of the Soviet Trade Union Delegation,

NIKOLAI SHVERNIK,

Chairman.

February 5, 1942.

Publications Received

Current History—Magazine (Current Events Pub. Co., 25 cents, 288 pp.).

Intermission. M. E. Beggs and D. W. Humphreys (Geo. Phillip & Son, 1s6d, 101 pp.).

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A Thousand Shall Fall by Hans Habe (Geo. Harrap, 10s6d, 279 pp.).

Country With a Plan by Pat Sloan (Fore Publications, 6d, 61 pp.).

Canteens in Industry (L.R.D. Pamphlet, 2d, 15 pp.).

Russia Fights On by Maurice Hindus (Collins, 8s6d, 253 pp.).

Mobilize Industry

by JOHN AUSTIN

THE most striking fact of all is the splendid morale of British working men and women." While paying this tribute N. Shvernik, leader of the Soviet Trade Union Delegation, also put his finger on the weak spots in Britain's industrial war effort. At most of the sixty factories visited the Delegation saw good organisation of production and excellent equipment. "Britain," said Shvernik, "undoubtedly possesses all that is requisite to increase the output of all forms of armaments; but in industry there are still very considerable unutilised reserves. There are idle tools and equipment; not sufficient use made of women in industry; an incorrect attitude to the initiative of the workers; an unwillingness to listen to the voice of the man or woman at the bench and even, in individual factories, a limiting of the level of output."

Why is this, and what can be done about it?

The Communist Party Memorandum on Production gives the answer. In case there are any lingering doubts about the urgency of the need to squeeze the last ounce out of Britain's war production capacity, a glance at the foreword will dispel them.

America's arms programme is enormous. But the size of the figures should not blind us to the fact that it is still at the blue-print stage. Potential superiority is not the same thing as guns, planes and tanks now. For instance, the latest reported (U.S.) production of 2,000 planes a month, or even the 1942 plan of 4,000 combat planes a month, contrasts with the Nazi figure, placed by authoritative opinion at between lower and upper limits of 3,500 and 6,000 planes a month.

The spread of the war to the East, the immense wastage in Russia and the loss of key Soviet production centres are a heavy drain. Hitler has already harnessed, and is frantically driving, the whole of the war production resources of Europe and preparing for a terrific onslaught in the coming spring. Distances between the different fronts or potential fronts for the Nazis are short and communications relatively easy. Britain's equipment is

needed for many, and mostly distant, fronts—Far East, Libya and Mediterranean, U.S.S.R., Britain, and the early opening of a front on the European Continent. At this critical stage of the war Britain's contribution to the allied cause is decisive.

Yet everyone knows that output is far smaller than it could be, as Shvernik observed. What is wrong? The workers are doing what they can. They seize upon every opportunity they get. "Tanks for Russia Week" saw a 20 per cent. jump in output. Where managements have fully co-operated through joint production committees there have been magnificent achievements on a workshop scale. But the drive and initiative from below is only one side of the picture. The success of this drive largely "depends on the efficiency of the organisation of industry and economy as a whole." We must get the picture in perspective.

Without a comprehensive plan and a central authority to formulate it in relation to strategy and see that it is carried out, maximum output will never be attained. This is obvious commonsense. And despite the powerful vested interests which oppose change for their own selfish ends and the sectional conflicts which stand in the way, a central planning authority heads the list of demands, not only of the Communist Party but of all disinterested critics of the current chaos, including many leading industrialists.

Thus, in a letter to *The Times* (January 30, 1942), Sir Alexander Roger, director of B.S.A. and many other big companies, who headed the Supply Mission to India last year, wrote :—

A really gigantic production programme calls for mass production as distinct from batch production, and requires cold, calculated and accurate planning right from the mines, quarries and all other sources of raw material, up to the time the complete article arrives at the end of the assembly line.

The Communist Party calls for :—

A Central Planning Commission . . . charged with the responsibility of preparing and operating a single plan for war production, drawing the separate plans of the different departments into

such a single plan in relation to existing available materials, plant and man-power, and co-ordinating the consequent placing of orders . . . and possession of the necessary executive powers.

The weakness of the capitalist criticism is that while it may enumerate the present defects in some detail, it usually shies at giving either the basic reasons for them or facing up to the only remedies.

The muddles resulting in under-used man-power and capacity, faulty ordering, conflicting priorities, unnecessary haulage, the lack of standardisation, the absence of checks on the efficiency of firms and the neglect of the elementary things necessary to keep the workers at the peak of efficiency—these are all too familiar to need more detailed enumeration here. Far more important are the reasons. The antiquated Government administrative structure, which embraces nine different departments concerned with production and a host of subordinate committees, renders planning almost impossible. Worse still, it blocks the delegation of effective powers to the men in the localities. The Regional Boards have only “advisory” powers. The local official of the least important of all the departments can ignore them. He himself is kept in leading strings by his Whitehall boss. All local initiative tends to be stifled. The Treasury, the senior Government department, which controls Civil Service jobs as well as expenditure, keeps a tight hold on the purse strings and, as in peacetime, is intent on “saving money” rather than maximising production.

Why is any change in this fossilised set-up resisted? Because it preserves established privileges. First there are the monopolists:—

The existing monopolist structure of the main industries in this country has been made the basis for the wartime controls which are manned by their representatives. The Ministry of Supply, the Ministry of Aircraft Production, and the Shipbuilding Section of the Admiralty are alike staffed by those with a record of limiting output. The same applies to the Commodity Controls. In practically every case the Controller is a big business representative of those financially interested in the commodity. The monopolists are, in effect, left in control of their own affairs. This makes a farce of the whole nominal system of State control.

The monopolies prospered by restricting output and capacity to keep up prices.

The same mentality dominates to-day since the underlying fear is excess capacity after the war. Steel is the most glaring example.

The struggle to maintain existing advantages dominates the conduct of affairs in the more competitive industries like engineering, transport and coal. The sectional interests here are not primarily concerned with maximising output of war material, but are looking for opportunities to get ahead of their rivals after the war. They are using the war situation to baulk their competitors and trying to conserve their resources (e.g., the “easy” seams in the coal mines) for the time when E.P.T. is no more and they can reap the full harvest of profits. Both the monopolies and the big concerns in the more competitive industries are intent on strengthening their dominating position by squeezing out the small men or denying them opportunities.

Domination of the departments and controls by big business with the easy-money mentality is reflected in the wasteful contracting and price-fixing systems which provide no proper check on the performance of contractors and tend positively to encourage inefficiency. Jealousy, secretiveness and vested interest in particular designs or methods perpetuate excessive variety and prevent the proper pooling of knowledge.

The rigid division between management and worker in industry repeatedly frustrates attempts by the workers to use their skilled knowledge and experience to stop waste and improve workshop organisation and practice. The determination to “keep the worker in his place” and keep down wage costs for after the war, also reacts unfavourably on output. Anomalies in the wages paid for similar work; the extremely low earnings of women; income tax on overtime and the joint assessment of husband and wife act as serious deterrents. Indifference to the health and welfare of the workers, especially in regard to food, transport, medical attention; and nurseries and shopping time for married women—all so vitally necessary for full output—is a reflection of the prevalent attitude of the employing class and its aim of keeping down “costs” and retaining the lion’s share in the product of industry.

The reluctance of the Government to use its extensive powers to compel unwilling firms to cease obstructing the war effort has now become a major scandal. But in view of the hands at the helm, it is quite understandable. So far as production is concerned, the Government is the prisoner of big business, which can hardly be expected to pass sentence on itself, and is allowed openly to flout declared Government policy. These same controllers have no interest in seeing the State factories run efficiently. This would show up their own concerns and might even drive down contract prices. Hence the managerial staff of the R.O.F.s are usually underpaid second-raters; all the best men being cornered by the trusts.

What can be done? Seven main demands state the aims. The governing principles should be: effective State control of all war industry; central planning and unified control; maximum decentralisation in execution; independence of the controls from financially interested parties; labour participation in the controls, at the centre, in the localities and at the place of work through joint production committees; wages and conditions of work designed to secure maximum production efficiency; equality of sacrifice where sacrifices have to be made.

Big changes at the top are needed. But political realism insists that these changes must be within the broad framework of the present capitalist structure. To call for all-round nationalisation at this juncture is merely to play into the hands of the reactionaries who are trying to divide, when the urgent need is "the united effort of all sections for the common aim." Time is short. There is much to be done. Unnecessary controversy wastes both time and energy and diverts attention from the main task.

Even so, "such immediate emergency wartime measures as can be agreed by all sections in industry" are sufficiently far-reaching. Their realisation would double war output in a matter of months. At the head of the list necessarily comes a Central Planning Commission under a Minister of Production. At long last a Minister of Production has been appointed. But his powers are limited and labour matters are reserved. Such a Ministry cannot possibly meet the need. The scope of the planning authority must embrace *all* the functions

of production—raw materials, man-power, capacity, transport, material civil needs, research and even propaganda. Even more important, no plan for Britain's war effort can possibly be carried through without the greatest possible decentralisation of authority. The mass of detail must be broken down to manageable sections on a geographical basis. Hence the paramount importance of the Regional Boards, the committees attached to the district capacity exchanges and the joint production committees in the factories. The obvious first need is for the Minister of Production to appoint his representative with extensive powers to *do*, not merely to *advise*, in each of the twelve regions. Real co-ordination of effort would then become possible; the Regional Boards would at last become effective bodies and the structure created through which local initiative—whether of the district offices of the unions, the trades councils, the housewives' committees or the joint production committees in the workshops—could begin to express itself in effective action. The wasteful and corrupt system of subcontracting—under which the main contractor is charged with organising the work of the smaller firms—could begin to be liquidated. The State could move towards direct responsibility for all contracts and the proper detailed control and co-ordination of the work of all the contractors, large and small.

Inefficient, "die-hard" and self-centred employers would very soon have to toe the line. The very existence of some accessible body possessing real authority on the spot would transform the character of local initiative and lift its possibilities on to a higher plane.

Effective trade union and workshop representation on every body concerned with planning and execution right down the line is rightly in the forefront of the demands. It is also necessary to bring much greater pressure to bear on employers who refuse to co-operate with the workers on production questions. But the groundwork done by the Communist Party over the past few months is already bringing results. Transport House is at last convinced. Employers' organisations no longer oppose. Many individual employers advocate joint action. Continued pressure from the workshops is capable of attaining the whole programme. Con-

stant exposure of the chaos in transport and persistent representations through the trade union machinery, the regional organisation, deputations to M.P.s and Cabinet Ministers, and publicity through the Press are breaking down resistance to the unification of transport and of the coal industry. They are forcing the monopolists, like the steel ring, to loosen their grip. They are pushing into the forefront the need for extended rationing and the proper planning of the supply of civil goods. Even the negative, blighting, retarding influence of purely financial considerations, championed by the Treasury, is being undermined. The fallacies of the official nonsense on wages and inflation, "vicious spirals" and income tax are becoming ever more obvious.

The simple remedies are clear : (1) plan production for civil needs with a view to maintaining a minimum standard of health and efficiency, cut out all luxuries, and introduce standardisation to economise material and effort ; (2) extend rationing to all goods in short supply and fix prices at levels the workers can pay ; (3) rationalise distribution and cut the cost.

Financial considerations are at present blocking the most vital of all measures to achieve full war output—adequate pay and improved conditions. Full mobilisation of man and woman power, and the full utilisation of those already in industry are thereby obstructed. The most glaring are cut piece rates and the very low wages of women workers. "Total mobilisation of the people . . . can only be achieved . . . on the basis of equality of sacrifice." No amount of regimentation will serve without it.

On wages and prices the Communist Party demands an increase in wage rates commensurate with the rise in the cost of living ; the levelling up of the wages of the under-paid, especially women ; effective guarantees on piece rates ; by collective bonus or other means the raising of the earnings of skilled men on time work ; equal pay for equal work, or the rate for the job whether done by man or woman ; abolition of income tax on overtime and the joint assessment of husband and wife ; and, of course, effective price control and full-scale rationing.

Nowhere is the lack of planning, the failure to appreciate the special needs of total production more manifest than in the indifference to working conditions. The scientific findings of innumerable authorities are widely ignored. Even Government factories attempt to work both men and women over 70 hours a week. Despite the perfection of preventative measures, T.N.T. is still to-day poisoning thousands of workers in the filling factories. Miners are expected to "work through" on buns and synthetic cake. "War is no excuse for bad catering," says *Pravda*. Our advancing Soviet Allies appreciate the relationship between good food, and other essentials to health and efficiency, and output. The Communist Party in Britain, the party closest to the workers, voices the needs of British workers if they too are to play their full part. The memorandum lists the main demands under the heads of hours, safety and health measures, canteens, transport to and from work, housing and billeting.

Finally, it stresses the ways in which propaganda, practically conceived and well directed, can contribute to higher output. At present the general and often crude exhortations reflect the unwillingness of the employing class, jealous of their privileges, to co-operate with the workers. Hence their ineffectiveness. The finest possible production propaganda is to give the workers some say in production matters, make them feel that they have a real opportunity to participate to the full in the fight against Hitlerism. Apart from this nothing would do more to lift morale in the factories than the removal of the ban on the only working-class newspaper, the *Daily Worker*.

We recognise that no measures of improved planning or control can alone solve the problem. The decisive role must be played by the worker at the bench, in the mines, on the railways, in the docks and the shipyards.

Although the demands put forward for achieving full war output are interim demands, they are nevertheless political. The struggle to attain them is a political struggle embracing all forms of mass pressure, except those that even temporarily hold up production. A widespread ignorance of the technique of this political campaigning is one of the weaknesses the working class has to overcome. All the

different available methods of exerting pressure must be worked out in detail, including new forms. Have all the possible lines of action through trade unions, trades councils and other long-established workers' organisations been thoroughly explored? Is sufficient use made of the twelve Regional Boards and the advisory committees attached to the more numerous capacity exchanges? Are intractable workshop problems being forcibly brought to the attention of these bodies? Do groups of workers who have successfully solved some production problem let others know of it and show them the way?

It is certain that sooner or later the persistent efforts of millions of workers in thousands of work-places will force the changes desired. Definite progress can be

recorded. A Minister of Production has been conceded; employers are to be forced to co-operate in production committees. The obstructionists are definitely on the defensive—are giving ground. The far more difficult problems solved by our Soviet comrades and their immense sacrifices in this our common struggle should make us ashamed to succumb to temporary frustration. The pace of advance in different sectors is bound to be uneven; any big jump forward cannot come without periods of preparation. It is now clear that the programme can be realised if only the working class appreciates its own power. Persistent efforts everywhere all the time should now very quickly bring the big qualitative changes which are shown to be necessary.

Hindrances to the National Effort

by L. C. WHITE

(Civil Service Clerical Association)

A READER of the LABOUR MONTHLY, a young woman civil servant in Harrogate, wrote to the Editor, asking to be put in touch with other readers in the district, with a view to forming a discussion group. A few days later her landlord was visited at his place of employment by a detective who, according to the landlord's version of the incident, informed him that his young lodger was a Communist and that she was seeking to establish contacts with other Communists in the district. After making a number of enquiries about her friends and her habits, he left, promising to furnish the landlord with any further information he might discover about the lady. The facts were reported to the Civil Service Clerical Association, of which the lady was a member, and, on her behalf, I wrote to the Home Office for an explanation. After some considerable delay I received the following reply:—

With reference to your letter regarding the case of Miss W., a member of your Association, I am directed by the Secretary of State to say that he has had enquiry made and understands that Miss W.'s landlord was seen by the police in connection with certain routine enquiries of a kind which it is necessary in wartime to make from time to time. The Secretary of State regrets any inconvenience and distress which the enquiry

may have occasioned to Miss W., but he is informed that no statement to the effect that Miss W. was associating with Communists was made by the officer, and that it was made quite clear to her landlord that the enquiries had established that there was no ground for criticism of her conduct.

It will be seen that the Home Office, apart from denying the assertion that the landlord was told that his lodger was a Communist, admits the truth of everything else. I dismiss the denial with the observation that it is hardly likely that the landlord's recollection, which is admitted to have been correct in all other respects, failed him in this one particular. The real significance of the Home Office reply is that it offers no explanation of how the police became aware of the contents of the lady's enquiry to the LABOUR MONTHLY, or indeed no satisfactory reason why the police call was made at all.

Now this is only one of a number of recent occurrences which suggest that the Security authorities—in which term I include also M.I.5—are engaged in a drive against civil servants suspected of Left Wing views. Limitations of space prevent me mentioning all the cases that have come to notice, but I can perhaps refer briefly to one or two in order to indicate the sort of thing that is happening.

Mrs. A. was appointed to a temporary executive post in a Supply Ministry. The speed with which she grasped the intricacies of her work quickly won for her the commendation of her senior officers. Suddenly and without explanation she was told that she must leave the Ministry at once; her dismissal could have been no more peremptory if she had been caught with her hand in the till. Her persistent demands and those of the Association for an explanation ultimately elicited the fact that she had been dismissed on security grounds. Vague references were made to her husband's political views and associations. It was clear that her dismissal was on this account. Her husband, who was serving with the Army, had, shortly before, been given special leave of absence to visit America for a purpose which was sufficiently important in the national interests to enable an official permit to be issued enabling him to leave the country. At the time of his wife's dismissal he was, and still is, engaged on military duties of a far more confidential nature than anything his wife was doing as a civil servant. Except, however, for the vague suggestion linking her dismissal with her husband's politics, this lady has never been given any reason for her discharge.

Miss B. was transferred from the Headquarters of an important Government department to one of its small branches. She was the local Chairman of her Trade Union and Secretary of the Whitley Council. The only explanation given was that the Security authorities had insisted that she be removed to a sphere where she would not have access to confidential documents or information. No hint was given, nor was any suggestion made, that she had ever been suspected of any breach of confidence. From persistent enquiries it emerged that the Security authorities had received information—most of which, incidentally, was incorrect—that she was associating with known Communists. In what particular respect this disqualified her remaining in her former office, or to handle confidential documents with the same fidelity to duty she had always displayed, nobody attempted to explain.

Mr. C. was, before the war, an employee of a timber firm which did a large amount of business with Russia. He became keenly interested in the U.S.S.R. and visited that country on one or two occasions. He was

a member of various organisations for studying the language and the life of the Russian people. At the outbreak of war his firm was absorbed by the Ministry of Supply in the Timber Control. Within a few weeks he was on the streets, dismissed at a moment's notice by order of the Security authorities. He applied for employment in other Government offices. On at least two occasions he was accepted by the local officials and was waiting to be told when to commence work. Mysteriously on each occasion it was subsequently discovered that the post to which he was to have been appointed had suddenly ceased to exist.

What explanation can there be for these and for the many other cases I could mention? I suggest as the only logical explanation that the Security officials, who possess alarming powers in these matters, are, as a matter of deliberate policy, seeking to rid the Civil Service of men and women whom they suspect of Left Wing tendencies and of sympathies with Soviet Russia.

It may be, of course, that our Security officials and the military gentlemen of M.I.5 are just political ignoramuses who have yet to grasp the real significance of the struggle in which we are engaged; that they have still to learn that Fascism is the evil against which we are fighting, and that Fascists are the enemies for whom they should search. If this is the explanation—and it is the most charitable of all those that suggest themselves—it is surely high time that they were removed from a sphere of activity in which they are doing grave harm to our cause.

But there is another and much more insidious explanation, the existence of which cannot be ignored. It is that, in this powerful and somewhat mysterious Service, reaction and reactionaries are so firmly installed that they are able to indulge their own political prejudices in a manner which, far from aiding the war effort, must ultimately endanger public confidence in the sincerity of the purposes for which the war is being waged. This possibility, I suggest, gives cause for serious thought, as does the equally alarming possibility that, in their concentration upon the search for persons of Left Wing views, the Security officials may very well be overlooking the Fascists in our midst.

The Problem of Labour Unity

by ALDERMAN LUKE HOGAN

(Leader of the Labour Party in the Liverpool City Council)

[We have received from Alderman Luke Hogan the following communication on the urgent problem of Labour Unity. Alderman Hogan's viewpoint on many issues, as he makes clear, may differ from those of the LABOUR MONTHLY; but for that very reason his firm declaration for all-inclusive unity of the Labour Movement is the more important, and we are glad to print his contribution. Alderman Hogan, a trade unionist of forty years' standing, and Trade Union Divisional Officer for a large portion of the North-West, is one of the three members of the Liverpool Civic Defence Emergency Committee, and Vice-Chairman of the Production Executive, North-Western Regional Board.]

MAY I presume upon your limited space to express my view upon working-class unity as a necessary contribution to the war effort, and which I have been tempted to do for some time, realising only too well the trend of opinion obtaining in trade union and Labour circles to-day.

There are two matters upon which the working class express themselves in definite fashion. Firstly, determination to win the war, although puzzled with its conduct abroad and utterly dissatisfied with the hesitancy to wage *total* war at home, and the failure to bring rent, interest and profit into the same relationship to the national effort as human life, broken homes and shattered ambitions. Secondly, a feeling of bewilderment as to why all sections of the working class should not be bound more closely for the purpose of ensuring and hastening victory now, and of securing for the workers generally the fruits of that victory in the post-war years.

It is clear to me, from experience at many meetings and conferences I have attended since the war, that great numbers of workers (and certainly the more youthful of them) do not agree with the rigid rulings of either the T.U.C. or the National Labour Party.

Let me make it clear that not only am I not a Communist, but that I have fought Communism throughout the years, particularly in the North, and, for so doing, have been bitterly and personally attacked in a more marked degree than even Sir Walter Citrine; but to remind me of those things now and refer me to what the Communists said or did prior to, and even in the early stages of, the war or to the attacks made upon the T.U.C.

(all of which were, in my judgment, unjustifiable), has no more relation to the realistic situation facing the whole Labour movement to-day than what Gladstone said in 1870.

I do not believe that a Communist government in this country on Russian lines is either desirable or necessary, although I certainly would like to see Russian Communists' ideas as to how the war should be waged tried out by our own Government. I do not agree with certain tendencies of Communist thought towards religious view and practice. As a Roman Catholic I would never give way to any Government daring to interfere with my religious principles, but neither would I allow any Church—not that they would—direct my duty in civic and public matters. Communism in Russia was completely justified because a major operation was necessary to rid Russia of the old evil Czarist regime. There are other methods of achieving freedom and economic security for the workers of this country when they cease to be so electorally stupid as they have been for years, and when they realise how the fulfilment of their hopes can be achieved.

We know that decisions against any collaboration with the Communist Party, even during the war, have been taken at national conferences. Some of us, however, are equally aware how those decisions are reached and, believe me, they are not a true reflection of rank and file feeling in the country. This observation may come as a shock to some leaders in higher places. It is true that delegates to the T.U.C. and Labour Party Conferences are elected by the rank and file, but we know, however, that their block votes in conference are determined beforehand by the various

Executive Committees, largely on advice by chief officials who, in turn (legitimately no doubt), play up to one another in the bargaining which goes on for seats on the National Executive, and hence you get the movement controlled in the main by permanent officials.

No! If our leaders really want a true picture of the feeling amongst the workers throughout the country, let them convene a conference of chairmen of Trades Councils and leaders of local Labour Parties in the land—men with knowledge and day-to-day contact with varying aspects of working-class view, and who desire only to see the fullest expression of working-class unity as an essential feature of the war effort.

If I am referred to the vacillating policy of the Communist Party—very well! If doubts are expressed whether the Communist Party will play the game towards Labour when the war is over—we shall see. Will our present relationships with the Conservative and Liberal Parties persist after the war? Will the back-scratching of the workers now by Capitalism be continued after the war? We shall see!

We are all fighting for our very lives and future hopes *now*.

Do I trust the Government or Government promises as to the new world to be created after the war? Not one little bit. I am convinced from my own experience that when the war is over and Hitler knocked out, Capitalism will fight for its existence as hitherto. We do not know what new excuses will be made to carry on a post-war Coalition Government. We do know that delaying tactics will be employed to the full to work out the New Order under the moth-eaten ideas of the "old gang"—if the workers allow it. I trust only the people themselves, who should keep their vision clear and their teeth set, and who will, under effective leadership, see to it that when the war has been fought and won after much sacrifice, a new and glorious vista will arise for the future.

These comments are sincerely made in no carping spirit or censure to those charged with leading the workers' cause. I would give my life willingly to prevent Hitler or Fascism coming here, and, by comparison, breaches of the Labour Party constitution are a small matter. Don't strain loyalty to breaking point.

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LAWRENCE & WISHART, 2, Southampton Place, W.C.1

Australia's Crisis

by BELL KEATS

IN September, 1938, at the time of the Munich crisis, Japanese warships were sighted off the coast of Australia. In January, 1942, Japanese warships attacked the Australian island of New Britain, overcame the garrison and seized the port of Rabaul. Munich had come home to roost.

For Australia the war has now entered a new phase. The attack of Japan in the South Pacific has brought the war to Australia's doorstep.

Rudely jerked from her Pacific slumbers Australia, through the medium of her press and her statesmen, has reacted with bitter criticisms of the British Government and overtures to the United States. Even prior to the Japanese attack there had been great dissatisfaction in Australia over Britain's war strategy, and repeated demands had been made by trade unions and in the press that Britain should open up a Second Front in Europe in order to bring about the quickest possible defeat of Hitlerite Germany. The Japanese successes in the Pacific, and particularly the debacle in Malaya, resulted in a mounting flood of criticism, and a rude shock was given in the statement of Mr. Curtin, Australia's Prime Minister :—

The Australian Government regard the Pacific struggle as primarily one in which the United States and Australia must have the fullest say in the direction of the democracies' fighting plan. Australia looks to America, free from any pangs as to traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom. We know the problem that the United Kingdom faces, but we know that Australia can go and Britain can still hold on. We are determined that Australia shall not go, and we will exert all our energies towards shaping a plan, with the United States as the keystone. (*The Times*, December 29, 1941.)

The immediate result of Mr. Curtin's appeals for aid has been the establishment of a Pacific War Council, the taking of Australian officers on to General Wavell's staff, and the offer of Dominion representation in the British War Cabinet. It is significant that by Australia's preference and New Zealand's desire, the operative Pacific War Council is to have its headquarters in Washington and not London.

In his speech in the recent debate, Mr. Churchill, when announcing the decision to set up a Pacific War Council, made it clear that the British Government regards the struggle against Hitler as the main struggle—that if Hitler is defeated Japan will follow. This was a reply and a welcome corrective to Mr. Curtin's statement three days earlier :—

There was never a more dangerous illusion than to imagine that the Pacific war is a mere subsidiary phase of the struggle with Germany, or that the downfall of the Hitler system automatically means the collapse of Japan. (*Reynolds*, January 25, 1942.)

Such a loose statement will undoubtedly find favour with Australia's Municheers, whose policies, carried out by the Lyons and Menzies Governments, have largely contributed to the crisis now facing Australia. There had been complete connivance with the Munich policy and the betrayal of Czecho-Slovakia. There had been the same "non-intervention" during the Spanish war. And, even more disastrous for Australia, an open policy of appeasement towards Japan. As late as March, 1941, when he visited London, Menzies made a speech in London of appeasement to Japan and hostility to the United States, which to-day stands in strange contrasts to the recent statement of Australia's present Prime Minister :—

With regard to Japan, nothing disturbed him more than to encounter that type of unresponsive mind which appeared to assume that because Australia—and the British people—were engaged in a deadly war . . . we should at the same time, because Japan had made an agreement with the Axis Powers, permit ourselves, willy-nilly, to drift into an atmosphere in relation to Japan which was at least dubious and might quite frankly be dangerous. . . . (*The Times*, March 3, 1941).

It was because of this attitude that both the Lyons Government and the Menzies Government carried on an increasing trade with Japan, selling large quantities of scrap-iron to the detriment of Australia's own defence. The workers of Australia, throughout this period, revealed a far more realistic attitude. They strongly opposed Munich. Numbers of them travelled half-way across the world to fight against Hitler and Mussolini in Spain.

And the dockers of Sydney and Port Kembla struck work again and again to prevent scrap-iron going to Japan.

After the German attack on the Soviet Union the workers of Australia took immediate action and cleared Menzies and his Munichers out of office. The Fadden Government that followed was too closely identified with the policies pursued by Menzies to stay more than a couple of weeks in office; and so the Labour Party came into power.

The present crisis and Australia's reaction can only be fully appreciated through an understanding of the whole background. With a population of some seven millions inhabiting a country almost as large as the United States, Australia constitutes one of the main undeveloped and under-populated territories in the world. Originally a British agrarian hinterland, providing wool, meat and wheat for Britain, and gold and mineral supply for British industries, Australia developed particularly during and after the war of 1914-18, as a secondary imperialist power. Twenty banks in 1914 have become nine banks to-day. Between 1912 and 1931 Australian manufactures rose in value from £39 millions to £106 millions, or from 25 per cent. to 33 per cent. of total production. Nevertheless Australian manufactures in 1939 still constituted less than 40 per cent. of total production. British imperialism has retarded her industrial development, partly through banking control, restriction of loans, etc. (e.g., the sudden cutting off of all London loans in 1929, as a result of the suggestion of the British Economic Mission), and partly through refusal to export necessary machine tools and machine-tool-making machinery to enable Australia to develop an independent engineering industry.*

Australia started this war with no motor industry, no aircraft industry, no machine tool industry, and very little steel and shipbuilding. Pre-war output figures revealed Australia producing 1 per cent. world output of copper, 3 per cent. world output of tin, 7 per cent. world output of zinc, and less than 1 per cent. world output of pig-iron and steel. A comparison

of Australian pre-war capacity with that of Japan gives the following:—

	Australia	Japan
Steel (million tons)	1	7
Merchant ships launched (000 tons)	—	442
Electricity (million kilowatt hours)	3,909	26,714
Number of workers employed in metal, chemicals, engineering (000's)	220	1,000
Total value of output, metal, chemicals, engineering (£ millions)	63	200

Remembering that Australia has a coastline of 12,210 miles and a population of only 7,000,000 as against Japan's 80,000,000, we can begin to appreciate both the alarm felt in Australia and her turning to a vast industrial country like the United States for aid.

Before considering what policy should be pursued by those 7,000,000 people, it is necessary to take the analysis a step further. Australian industry, though not fully developed, is highly monopolised and interlocked. Of particular importance is Broken Hill Proprietary, Ltd., owners of coal mines, metal mines and steel works. It is the hub around which the whole of Australian secondary industry revolves, and it is closely linked with primary industry, too. The companies controlling the mineral wealth of Broken Hill, and particularly B.H.P., are closely connected with, and largely control, the banks, land companies, textiles, insurance firms, shipping, chemicals, gas, newspapers, radio stations, breweries, etc. Their dominating position in the economic life of the country is shown by the positions which the Menzies Government gave to managing directors of Broken Hill companies when he set up his Advisory Panel to the Ministry of Supply and Development (e.g., Essington Lewis, Sir Colin Fraser, Sir Alexander Stewart). Within the gigantic web cast by the B.H.P. and its associated companies sits the all-powerful Ballieu family, the eight members of which control £70,000,000 through their numerous directorships and investments.

These interests find their political expression in the United Australia Party which, under Lyons and then Menzies, has led Australia along the path of Munichism to its present crisis.

On the land the same picture of wealth in the hands of a few is revealed:—

Holdings,	1—1,000 acres	Number	Acreage
		221,018	54,245,244
"	1,000—5,000 "	39,851	75,592,389
"	over 5,000 "	4,002	46,233,541
Totals	...	264,871	176,071,174

* This, of course, has tended to make Australia look to the United States, who has not been slow to reciprocate. By 1936-37 United States capital investment in Australia had mounted up to £36,250,000.

More than 25 per cent. of the land of Australia is in the hands of 4,000 owners. A quarter of a million farmers own less than one-third of the land. And since 1929 a process has taken place of small and middle farmers becoming increasingly in debt to the banks, the big land companies and mortgage companies, who are gradually dispossessing the small and middle farmers and becoming gigantic landowners in themselves. The Australian Agricultural Company, for example, owns hundreds of thousands of acres; Goldsbrough Mortgage, Ltd., over a million acres; Australian Estates and Mortgage Company, half a million acres; Australian Mercantile Land and Finance Company, over a million acres; Australian Pastoral Company, over a million acres. These large holdings are particularly predominant in New South Wales, where 2,300 owners possess 30,000,000 acres.

The Country Party, in the main, is the spokesman of these interests, although it has to seek the support of the small and middle farmers. (In Victoria the Country Party is controlled by the small farmers, and is free from the connections of the Federal Country Party and its branches in other States. It is moderately progressive, and enjoys the support of the Victoria Labour Party.)

Australia's total employed population is about 2½ millions. It is one of the most highly organised and militant working classes in the capitalist world. Writing in 1913 Lenin pointed out that, owing to the fact that Australian capitalism was young:—

The Labour Party has to concern itself with developing and strengthening the country and with creating a central government. In Australia the Labour Party has done what in other countries was done by the Liberals, namely, introduced a uniform customs tariff for the whole country, a uniform Education Act, a uniform Land Tax, and uniform Factory Acts. Naturally, when Australia is finally developed and consolidated as an independent capitalist State the conditions of the workers will change, as also will the *liberal* Labour Party which will make way for a *socialist* Labour Party.

The last ten years in particular have seen the development of the process foreseen by Lenin twenty-nine years ago. With the emergence of Australia as a secondary imperialist power the Australian working class has become more militant, especially in New South Wales, the

industrial heart of Australia, and the seat of the dominant capitalist interests. The strikes against the sending of scrap-iron to Japan, the constant election of well-known Communists to leading trade union positions, the strong stand by the workers on behalf of the Soviet Union at the time of the Russo-Finnish war in 1940, the powerful anti-imperialist fight and strike wave during the imperialist phase of the present war, the inability of the Menzies Government to hold back these actions—all these are adequate testimony to the health and vigour of the Australian Labour movement, which from the time of the Eureka Stockade in 1857 has moved more and more into a position of leadership of the entire people of Australia. The result has been that 1942 finds Labour in office in the Federal Government, and Labour Governments in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania.*

No small part in the development of the Australian Labour movement has been played by the Communist Party. Formed in 1920, the Party first began to gain considerable influence over trade unionists at the time of the economic crisis, and went ahead rapidly after the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International (1935). Its influence, greatest in New South Wales, has also grown in other states, two seats having been won prior to the war in the Queensland and municipal elections.

* In New South Wales the position is complex enough to justify a little further explanation. Prior to the war the New South Wales Labour movement had been weakened by the disruptive activities of Lang, Beasley, etc., who constituted a reactionary, inner group of Catholic Action within the Labour movement. Progressive elements in New South Wales, however, were able to call a unity conference which resulted in the destruction of Lang's influence, and the setting up of a united and progressive New South Wales Labour Party which was officially recognised by the Federal Labour Executive. Owing to the militancy of the New South Wales Labour Party under its new leadership, Lang and Beasley broke away to form a "Non-Communist Labour Party"; soon after this the Federal Executive suspended the New South Wales Executive for its pro-Soviet stand in 1940, with the result that the militant workers broke away to form a separate State Labour Party. This State Labour Party has recently gained the Council in Cessnock, Australia's chief coal-mining area.

The suppression of the Communist Party in 1940 was not followed up by widespread arrests, etc., nor by a drive against the working class generally. This was almost entirely due to the militancy of the Australian working class and their high degree of organisation, there being close on a million workers organised into trade unions. Well-known militants and Communists continued to act and be re-elected as leaders of trade unions—W. Orr, Secretary of the Mineworkers' Federation (later retired through ill-health); E. Thornton, Secretary of the Ironworkers' Federation; T. Wright, Secretary of the Sheet-metal Workers; Healy, leader of the Waterside Workers; L. Sharkey (Chairman of the Communist Party before its suppression), Executive Committee member of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and others. The main influence of the Communist Party has been amongst the metal workers, miners and waterside workers, for whom they ran a special newspaper.

At the moment the Communist Party of Australia is still illegal. Two Communists, Max Thomas and Horace Ratcliff, who had been interned by the Menzies Government, were released by the Labour Government almost on its assumption of office. But no steps have yet been taken that indicate any intention of legalising the Communist Party. Undoubtedly Australia's Municheers are largely responsible for this, since, through their positions on the Government's Advisory Council, they are able to hamper the actions of the Labour Government. At the same time the Labour leaders must bear a measure of responsibility, since they are only too aware of the wide approval with which Australia's working

class would greet the legalisation of the Communist Party.

The Labour Government has taken a number of steps to speed up war production, helped in this by the attitude of the workers, who are making prodigious efforts. In some key factories movements of 200 per cent have already developed. The Labour Government has also shut down all luxury industries, conscripted all men up to the age of sixty, begun the enrolment of women, and, rather belatedly, announced the end of the "White Australia" policy.

Australia, because of the length of her coastline, shortage of man-power, low industrial capacity and output, faces a grave crisis. On her own, Australia might suffer defeat. The present situation demands firstly, the most effective mobilisation of the entire peoples of the Pacific, particularly the people of China, India, Dutch East Indies, Malaya and the Philippines. Here are no less than 1,000,000,000 people—more than enough to cope with Japan's 80,000,000, providing they are adequately equipped, and providing that they are given the freedom to mobilise themselves. Secondly, close co-operation with Britain, the United States, Canada, New Zealand and the Dutch East Indies, which, because of their navies and industrial strength, can help to equip the mighty armies of Asia that stand ready for the fight. For this, the inclusion of China on the Pacific War Council is essential. Thirdly, the fullest mobilisation of the Australian people and resources—which implies immediate legalisation of the Communist Party of Australia—giving full scope to the working class in utilising its initiative to increase production and defend the country.

IF you subscribed to R. Palme Dutt's *Crisis of the British People*, have you now filled in a form stating your wishes? (See announcements in January and February issues).

Book Reviews

On the Life of Stalin

The Life of Stalin by Ivor Montagu. (C.P.G.B. 6d.)
Landmarks in the Life of Stalin by E. Yaroslavsky.
 Lawrence & Wishart, 5s.

"JOSEPH STALIN (Yosif Vissarionovitch Stalin, b. Djugashvili) was on December 21, 1941, sixty-two years old. During these sixty-two years life has changed not only for him, but has been changed, largely by him, for 200 million people, who have become a united family, solid enough and powerful enough to constitute the main bulwark standing between the whole of civilisation and its destruction, a rampart that is yet standing where many proud and ancient nations have been washed away. What manner of man is he?"

This is the opening paragraph of a pamphlet that should be got into the hands of every worker in Britain. For in it, Ivor Montagu answers well and truly the question that concludes the paragraph, "What manner of man is this Joseph Stalin?" You will see him as a young lad in an ecclesiastical school making acquaintance with the writings of Darwin and Marx (prohibited reading) and protesting against "the humiliating and jesuitical methods that prevailed."

Then, when he was expelled from the Seminary, still as a young lad, his work as a revolutionary agitator in Transcaucasia.

Through it all, although they were far apart and didn't meet till the Tammerfors Conference in 1905, he was always in political accord with Lenin. So in the days of October, the days of the proletarian revolution and the years of Civil War and intervention that followed it, he was Lenin's best and most devoted disciple.

He was the comrade who was sent to every front, where the situation was most critical.

"Of Tsaritsyn, Kaganovitch, since one of Stalin's closest colleagues and Russia's greatest peacetime organisers, wrote: 'Those were indeed terrible days. You should have seen Stalin at that time. Calm and, as always, wrapped in his thoughts, literally never sleeping at all, he divided his tireless labours between the firing line and Army Headquarters. The situation at the front was almost desperate. . . . There was no way out for us. But Stalin did not trouble about this. He had one idea only: they must win. This

indomitable will of Stalin's transmitted itself to his immediate associates and, in spite of being in a situation from which there was practically no escape, no one for a moment had any doubts about victory."

And victory was achieved, as it was achieved on other fronts. But who can read that tribute without the thought, Oh, for such a man in Malaya, for such a man in Singapore.

Since the death of Lenin in 1924, he has fully justified his claim to be "a loyal disciple of Lenin." "You can't build Socialism in Russia," said the Mensheviks "you must first go through the stage of fully advanced capitalism." Stalin, following Lenin's teaching, proved that Socialism could be built in Russia and, in the process, shattered completely the anti-Soviet posturings of the so-called "Lefts" and their equally unscrupulous colleagues of the "Right."

The traducers of Stalin have brazenly lied about his attitude to internationalism. True to Lenin, he could not be other than true to the workers of all countries. Where was internationalism ever put better than in the following, taken from a speech made in 1931:—

"The working class of the U.S.S.R. is part of the world working class. Why does the international proletariat support us? How did we merit this support? By the fact that we are doing that which, if successful, will change the whole world and free the entire working class. But what is needed for success? We must march forward in such a way that the working class of the whole world, looking at us, may say: 'This is my vanguard, this is my shock brigade, this is my working-class state, this is my fatherland; they are promoting their cause, which is our cause, and they are doing this well; let us support them!'" How strikingly that applies to-day. "Our vanguard, our shock troops" against Fascism. We must rally with all our power to their support.

Montagu will provide an appetite for a larger and as a consequence, more informative work by E. Yaroslavsky, *Landmarks in the Life of Stalin*. This is a great book. Every party member, every shop steward, every worker in the trade union or labour movement should order a copy without fail. It is his or her duty to the working-class movement to read and study "Landmarks in the Life" of this, our greatest working-class leader.

WM. GALLACHER, M.P.

Correspondence

To the Editor

February 10, 1942.

Sir,—Who is this fellow Maurice Edelman, this egregious flat-earther, this *New Statesman* "expert" who publishes "chez Gollancz"? He is the same Maurice Edelman who in 1938 wrote "G.P.U. Justice," published by Allen & Unwin, a vindication of the Moscow Trials, described as authoritative by Hutt's Party comrades, and quoted in their publications. He is the Maurice Edelman who dozens of times lectured for the

Friends of the Soviet Union and the Russia To-day Society, organisations which considered him sufficiently expert through his personal knowledge of the Soviet Union to interpret Soviet life to British audiences.

Hutt bases part of his charge on distorted extracts from my review of Maynard's "Russia in Flux," published in *The New Statesman* of December 20, 1941. The theme of this review was that there is an essential continuity in Russian character, and I illustrated the persistence of Dostoyevskian self-abasement "continuing under the Bolsheviks" by the behaviour

of the Trotskyists at the Moscow Trials. Is it false friendship to the Soviet Union to describe the complexity of Russian character?

"The self-exclusion of Russia from the Western world . . . until 1917." Hutt trots out a string of British and Scottish Generals who advised Tsars, as proof that the Tsars did not exclude Russia from Western European thought.

He would, in the same way, prove that the Abyssinian peasant is in contact with European thought because Haile Selassie was advised by a British military mission. Hutt writes: "In my time every schoolboy knew that Russian life had been conditioned for 200 years by its contacts with the Western world." Of course, there were technicians from the West who helped Russia's development. But to exclude the peasant, and later the worker, from Western thought was the constant care of the Tsars, the Church and their Ministers until 1917.

I believe, with Stalin though not apparently with Hutt, in the historical continuity of the Russian spirit which to-day reproduces the heroism of Kutusov and his armies. Hutt calls this "a grotesque proposition." Let him fight it out with the Party theoreticians.

Yours truly,

MAURICE EDELMAN.

To the Editor

February 12, 1942.

Sir,—I have to refer to an article by Mr. Allen Hutt in your issue of February, in which he states that, "as a patriotic Englishman," he is incensed at certain remarks alleged to have been made by Mr. Vernon Bartlett, Mr. Maurice Edelman and myself.

"His heart," he says, "bleeds at the thought of 'the crimes committed by the Soviet Government'—his own words reported in the *Hampstead and Highgate Express*." He then goes on to quote some other passages from that report.

He omits to mention that I at once wrote to the paper (and the paper printed my letter in full) protesting against that illiterate report, which not merely misrepresented what I had said, but even reversed the sense of my remarks.

I spoke for an hour. Three-quarters of my speech was devoted to a wholehearted eulogy of the Soviet Union: to its unimpaired socialist foundation, to its socialist goal, to its triumph in the matter of children, education, nationalities, science, unity of spirit, and so on. This, incidentally, was the note on which I ended. For a quarter of an hour, in the middle of my speech, I dealt (to a socialist audience) with those features in the Soviet Union which I do not believe, and never shall believe, to be socialist. I explained, for instance, that there was no freedom of political discussion in the Soviet Union; that no good could come either of pretending that there was, or of denying that freedom of political discussion was of supreme importance; but that rather we had to understand the *reason* (and perhaps a compelling reason, in all the manifold circumstances) why this suppression had taken place.

As to "my heart bleeding at the thought of the crimes committed by the Soviet Government," here is, verbatim, what I said:—

"The real trouble in Anglo-Soviet relations has been that the overwhelming majority of people regarded her, before June 22, as an

inferior, and a tiny minority as a kind of superior that was a sort of angel that could do no wrong. Immense harm has been done by both these attitudes; what is absolutely vital is that we should treat the Soviet Union, and she should treat us, as an absolute equal, with different problems and different civilisations. The Soviet Union has no doubt committed, during the last 25 years, several blunders, and perhaps some crimes; but so has every government in the world, and not least our own. What is important is to bear in mind that, in spite of great difficulties and hardships, she has to her credit, during those 25 years, an achievement unparalleled in world history, and I am confident that there exists to-day in the Soviet Union the urge to achieve, over and above these past triumphs, a society really socialist in the fullest sense."

Yours truly,

VICTOR GOLLANCZ.

[Allen Hutt writes: The smokescreen with which Mr. Edelman is trying to cover his disorderly retreat will deceive no one. His initial disinterment of that monstrous old gag about the "Russian soul" looks no better now that he seeks to disguise it as "the complexity of Russian character." His historically false statement about "the self-exclusion of Russia from the Western world" is not made any the less false because he now implies that he didn't mean what he said. As for his sudden astonishing claim to agree with Stalin, I repeat that in his *New Statesman* review Mr. Edelman was concerned not to demonstrate "the historical continuity of the Russian spirit" (whatever such a phrase may mean) in an heroic or positive sense, but in a derogatory or negative sense; thus, he dismissed the confessions at the Moscow Trials as due to those "traditional commonplaces of Russia," "public admission of guilt, adulation of the ruler"; he equated Party cleansings with the old pogroms; he spoke about "the return to Slavism" (my italics) as if the Soviet Union's fraternal bond with other Slav peoples and States was like the reactionary Pan-Slavism of Nicholas I. Mr. Edelman's agitated wriggings may not be without their significance; they do not clear him of the charge I originally made, namely, that to slur over the differences between the Old Russia and the New U.S.S.R. is to do a grave disservice to the Grand Alliance.

As for Mr. Gollancz, I simply underline his admission that 25 per cent. of his speech was devoted to "explaining" that there were non-socialist and non-democratic "features" in the Soviet Union (*i.e.*, to an attack on the political and social system of our Ally). The fact that the remaining 75 per cent. was, he claims, a "wholehearted eulogy" is irrelevant. "A spoonful of tar will spoil a barrel of honey," says the old Russian proverb, which Lenin was so fond of quoting.

The "socialist audience" alibi is absurd; it was a public meeting called by a local Labour Party and attended by over 500 people.

I did not "omit to mention" that Mr. Gollancz had protested to the *Hampstead and Highgate Express* about their report of his speech in their issue of December 12. By the time my article had to be completed (on January 1), the two subsequent issues of that journal contained no such protest.]

LABOUR MONTHLY DEVELOPMENT FUND

Amount received during February, 1942 : £69 : 13 : 5½

Many favourable comments reached us last month, and continue to come in, on the new format of LABOUR MONTHLY. One reader even says : "However small it becomes, it will always be none the less welcome." Luckily, we have not yet reached the stage of supplying a magnifying glass with each copy sold. "I gave a copy," says another, "to a friend new to political thought, and he said L.M. was far and away the best of any pamphlet he had read. So you have another regular reader in him." If even one in every ten regular readers would do likewise, we should be surprised at the increase in our circulation. "It is inspiring to face up to the realities of the existing world situation as typified in the pages of L.M.," says a resident of Harrogate.

But in spite of all these bouquets (all accompanied by good, hard cash) the total is not what it might be. True, our deadline is even earlier this month than ever before and—who knows?—that cheque for £20 may be in the post. Yes, readers, you are busy on many fronts. You give to many causes. But LABOUR MONTHLY is a fighter on these fronts, too, and we ask you to think it over, what the magazine means in a world struggle of which you are a part, and make that extra effort now.

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